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Netram, John W. Richards.
Will India become Christian

WILL INDIA BECOME CHRISTIAN?

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WILL INDIA BECOME CHRISTIAN?

BY

J. W. R. NETRAM

AUTHOR OF "INDIA'S RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS," ETC.

With Introduction by

The Right Reverend W. T. GUNN, D.D.

MODERATOR OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA.

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PREFACE

Travelling on the train some time ago in India a European fellow-passenger, in the course of a conversation, on the religious situation in India, put to me the question: "Do you mean to say that Christianity is making an impression on organised Hinduism as such?" Crossing the Arabian Sea a few months ago, I was asked by the European engineer of the ship: "Is India becoming Christian?" On all hands these questions are being asked.

Supporters of Christian missions from Europe and America are asking the same questions. The Christian missionary enterprise in India dates from the first quarter of the eighteenth century. During these two hundred years the West has sent a large army of Christian missionaries and immense sums of money to India. The supporters of the enterprise are now beginning to ask: "Will India ever become Christian? Is it worth while sending men and money to that country with its hoary systems of religion and philosophy?"

Some are even asking and reasoning, "If India can produce men like Gandhi and Tagore, if India can produce a system of philosophy which has baffled and puzzled the best of thinkers, if India can boast of a civilisation reaching back thousands of years when Europe was yet living in savagery, what need is there of giving Christianity to that great country? In any case, why should we disturb the followers of other faiths?"

Some have even gone so far as to affirm that all faiths are good and that ultimately they all lead to the same goal. Hence the conclusion that it is neither reasonable nor necessary to take the trouble of preaching Christ and Christianity to the non-Christian world.

This book is simply an attempt to answer such questions. As I study the situation in India I find my country, in spite of its philosophy, its systems of religion and its civilisation, in a five-fold bondage: I find India in economic bondage, in social bondage, in mental bondage, in political bondage and, above all, in a terrible, religio-spiritual bondage. And I find no way out for India, except the way of Christ who has said, "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free."

Christ is "The Way, the Truth and the Life" and He alone is able to make India free economically, socially, mentally, politically and spiritually.

As I study the life of Christ I find that three simple but great words were constantly upon His lips: The Last, and the Least, and the Lost. If India today finds herself the last among the nations of the world, and if she finds herself the least among the nations of the world, and if she finds herself lost among the nations of the world, there is hope for India for these are the three words the Master loved to use.

Further, as I study the life of Christ I find that He never offered to anyone half salvation. Be it the case of an individual, or a society or a nation, wherever He goes He gives full and free salvation. One day the Lord Jesus Christ crossed over a storm-tossed lake and found on the other side a storm-tossed soul—a man who lived in the tombs with the dead, and said to him, "Come out, you can't be allowed to live in that condition any longer, you are face to face with life today." The man came out. Jesus then commanded the legion of unclean spirits to leave the man. They went out

of the man and entered a herd of swine feeding nearby, and the whole herd rushed down the precipice and was drowned in the sea. The keepers ran and told the people in the villages. When they came out to see what had happened they observed three things about this man—they saw that he was sitting at Jesus' feet, that he was clothed and that he was in his right mind. "Sitting at Jesus' feet," that is religion, the emancipation of the soul of man from the thraldom of sin and misery. "Clothed," that is economic uplift. "In his right mind," that is mental freedom. In other words the body, the soul and the mind—the whole personality of the man was saved when Jesus met him. That is full salvation, and that is what Jesus has come to give to India.

What a glorious day it will be when that one-fifth of the human race comes to the feet of the crucified One! And what a contribution India will have to make to the world! The day is fast approaching when the East and the West will mingle in the unique person of Jesus Christ and out of that mingling will evolve a more glorious, a stronger, a more uplifting and a richer Christianity than this world has ever known before.

Will India become Christian? We might as well ask "Will my eyes open to the light of the sun?" "Will my conscience respond to the truth?" or "Will my æsthetic nature respond to beauty?" Christ is the only answer to the riddle of the universe and, therefore, the only answer to and the only solution of the problems of India. The fact is that India cannot escape the inescapable Christ. Christ meets her at every turn. When every knee bows to Christ, India, too, must bow her knee to Him whom to know is life eternal. The hopeful feature of the situation in India is that she has begun to recognise this truth and to fix her eyes on this unique Person, the Christ, as they have never been fixed before.

Toronto, Canada.
January 1, 1930.

J. W. R. NETRAM.

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INTRODUCTION

It is a great pleasure to me to introduce to the readers of this book the author, Rev. John W. Richards Netram, of Indore, Central India.

I first met Mr. Netram during the Jubilee of the Canadian Mission of The United Church of Canada at Indore, Central India. In this mission, Mr. Netram is one of the honoured workers, especially devoted to evangelistic work. At the time of the meeting, Mr. Netram had just returned from accompanying and acting as interpreter for Rev. E. Stanley Jones in the great series of meetings so interestingly described in Dr. Jones' book, "The Christ of the Indian Road." Mr. Netram's contacts with the many peoples of his own great and beautiful land of India have been both wide and varied.

His own life story is full of interest. When in 1833, the British Government abolished slavery in the island of Trinidad, there was an instant demand from the planters for labour

and, in response to this demand, many thousands were for years brought from India under a system of contract labour. Among these was a young Hindu, named Netram.

In the meantime, a minister of the Presbyterian Church, Rev. John Morton, on a voyage for his health to Trinidad, had borne in upon his heart the needs of these East Indian peoples, so far removed from their homeland and from the life they knew.

In due time Mr. Morton and young Netram came together. Dr. John Morton taught the lad English and gave him a copy of the New Testament. The battle for the acceptance of Christ was a hard one. It meant the possibility of losing his child-wife and other dear ones and also the right, as eldest son, to be the head of the family back home in India and inherit the family possessions.

Leaving Trinidad for another of the West Indian islands, the young man was again reminded by Dr. Morton of the claims of his Saviour. On the voyage, the small boat was wrecked and the six survivors struggled for several hours, clinging to a plank. Four of these urged that the young man be pushed away so that the plank might support them

better, but the fifth took his part and suggested that they should all pray to Jesus for help. They all prayed in their own way, but young Netram made a vow, "O, Jesus Christ, Dr. Morton has been telling me that Thou art the Saviour of man. If Thou art the Saviour, then save me just this time and I will receive baptism tomorrow." Shortly after their prayer, they sighted a boat and were rescued. The Hindu lad went straight to Dr. Morton asking for baptism in fulfilment of his vow. This was given him and with it was given the Christian name of John, chosen because of Dr. John Morton's kindness to him.

For fourteen years the young man stayed in Trinidad and then went home to his own family in India. After the first welcome by his Hindu family there came the shock of his confession of Christ and the ensuing persecution, so that his life began to be in danger and he took refuge at the Bareilly Mission compound, many miles away. Unhappily, neither his wife nor any other member of his family became Christian nor would they receive him again.

He took service with a mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church and, later, mar-

ried a Christian woman. Their later years were, however, spent in the service of the Canadian Mission in Central India, a branch of that same mission of the Presbyterian Church in Canada which had been his helper in far-away Trinidad.

John Netram was survived by two sons, one of whom is connected with educational work in North India and the other is the writer of the present book.

Mr. Netram is a fluent and forceful speaker in English and also speaks several Indian languages. He shares heartily with other Indians in their love and appreciation of their great motherland of India and in the aspirations for national life of its many great peoples. He is, however, a Christian Nationalist, believing that the greatest progress will come to India through the acceptance of Jesus Christ as India's Saviour. He is, therefore, peculiarly fitted by birth and training to interpret to English readers, as he has done in this book, the great changes now going on in the life of India. Many of the stories and experiences here told are the results of his own personal observation and experiences.

If the reader is brought through this book

to appreciate more than before the greatness of the land of India and its multitude of peoples of many tongues and their infinite possibilities and is led to join in the sharing with them of the joys which have come to all peoples through Jesus Christ our Lord, then it will, I am sure, fulfil the heart's desire and prayer of our author.

WILLIAM T. GUNN,
Moderator of the General Council
of The United Church of Canada.

Toronto,
April Second,
Nineteen Thirty.

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS INDIA?

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS INDIA?

India is a land of beauty and wonder. It is called a country, but in reality it is a continent. Nay, it is a world in itself. Its geographical position and historical connections, its teeming millions with their variety of race and language, its hoary systems of religion and philosophy, as well as its worship of idols and of demons, combine to make it a most baffling task to answer accurately the question WHAT IS INDIA?

From the standpoint of beauty and civilisation, India's Himálayas, valleys, forests, plains, lakes, canals; and her great characters like Kabír, Buddha, Asoka, Tukárám, Kálídás, Rámánuj, Ráma, Sítá, Tagore, Ganhdi are known all over the world. The Táj Mahal at Ágrá is by common consent considered the most beautiful building in the world, and the highest mountain peak is India's Mount Everest or Gaurí Shankar which is more than

twice as high as the highest of the Alps, 29,002 feet, or almost six miles.

India's fertile soil is capable of producing two good crops in the year. Almost all the minerals are found in India including gold, silver, iron, coal, kerosine oil, salt, lead, saltpetre, mica, tin, alum and copper. India is well known for its precious stones. It has been called "the Golden Bird," "the Fulcrum of the British Empire," "the Biggest Jewel in the British Crown."

Geographically, India is central, reaching out to China and Japan on the east; Arabia and Egypt on the west; Mesopotamia, Asia Minor and Persia on the northwest and Central Asia on the north. Its length, from north of Kashmir to Cape Comorin in the south is 2,022 miles, and its breadth, from the easternmost point of Burmah to the westernmost point of Baluchistan, is 2,520 miles. The total area of India is 1,802,656 square miles, divided between British India and the native states ruled by Indian chiefs. There are upwards of 600 native states with a total area of over 711,000 square miles and 72,000,000 people, varying in size from petty states such as Lawa in Rajputana, with an area of 19 square miles,

to states such as Hyderabad which is as large as Italy and has a population of 13,000,000.

India's population equals that of the whole of Europe minus Russia. It is more than three times that of the United States of America and twice that of North and South America combined. One-fifth of the total population of the globe lives in India. Its children under 14 years of age number three times the total population of England, Wales and Scotland. India is a country of youth, for fully one-third of its total population is under 15 years of age.

There are 220 languages spoken in India and in them about 4,000 newspapers and periodicals are issued from 3,500 presses, in spite of India's notorious illiteracy!

India has a network of railways extending over 40,000 miles, and all the cities are connected with metalled roads over which numerous motors and motor buses run both by day and night. The telephone, the telegraph and the post office render splendid service. India now also has the wireless, the radio, aeroplanes, and an air service with Europe.

Mentally, India is Asia's brain. As Greece did the thinking for Europe so India has been

doing the thinking for Asia. As goes India so goes Asia.

Spiritually, India is Asia's leader. It has been the birth-place of at least three great religions of the world—Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism—which have affected about one-third of the population of the globe. There are numerous religions in India and everything is connected with religion. It is not Wembley exhibitions but religious meetings that draw crowds in India. Religion in India is not a matter for great occasions, or one day in the week, or even for temple services. It is the thread on which a Hindu's daily life is strung. His bath, his meals, his relations with wife and friends and servants, his journeys, his business transactions, are all regulated and sanctified by religious rule. A religious ceremony preceded his conception and accompanies every important occasion or happening thereafter.

In India there are about 220,000,000 Hindus, 70,000,000 Mohammedans and more than 5,000,000 Christians. The Hindus show a decrease every decade, the Mohammedans and the Buddhists increase slightly, but the greatest increase is in the Christian Church which

is adding to itself about 2,000 people every week.

Educationally, India is behind many countries of the world. As yet only about 10 per cent. of the population is counted literate. There are many reasons for this, but I can only speak of one or two here. While there are only 2,150 towns in India there are 728,-600 villages. Out of about 320,000,000 people 250,000,000 live in the villages, and their occupation is mostly farming. There are very few schools for them, in fact many villages have no school at all. The idea of night schools has not yet taken hold of India; nor have these poor, simple village people yet learned the advantages of good literary education. The parents work in the fields and the children tend the cattle.

Another reason is that the women of India have been living through the centuries in seclusion or Purdah. Education has been looked upon as harmful to women. The old Brahman teaching has been that the one duty of a woman is to serve her husband. This secures for her the approval of the gods both here on earth and beyond the grave. Marriage, therefore, becomes compulsory and to keep a

girl unmarried after the age of puberty is considered a heinous sin. As long as she lives with her husband he will look after her comforts and when the husband dies, and if she has not had the good fortune to precede him, she is expected to burn herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. Therefore she needs no education or provision beyond her husband's life. For these and other reasons there are today only 21 literate women in every 1,000.

Whatever you may think of the Purdah system do not imagine that it is due to sheer foolishness and ignorance. There are several reasons why this system came into vogue. Before the British Government came into India and before there was one supreme government over the whole country, particularly during the 500 years of Mohammedan rule in India, strong tyrants used to carry away young girls by force, and there was no central authority to which to appeal. This is how the last Mohammedan Nawáb Wájid Alí Sháh of Oudh, in north India, gathered about 400 women in his harem in Lucknow. Their empty palaces can be seen to this day. Under those circumstances, what do you think the poor defenceless people could do? The only course open to

them was to hide their women. To my mind this is at least one of the reasons why child marriage began to be practised, for Indian history tells us that the ancient custom in India was what is called "Swayambar" or choosing of the life-partner according to one's own tastes.

This is a somewhat dark picture of India. But the terrific rate at which India is moving forward at present is impossible to describe. The "Unchangeable East" is changing with almost alarming rapidity and adjusting itself to the demands of the times. It is not an unusual thing these days to see non-Christian young girls in schools and colleges. The Purdah system is fast disappearing, widow marriages are becoming more common and numerous efforts are being made to bring the women of India up to a high standard. A few years ago the President of the All-India National Congress was a lady—Mrs. Shorojni Naidu—and the President of the Labour Movement in Ahmedabad (Gujarat), which is called the "Manchester of India," is Miss Anasuya Bhen, a most enlightened and cultured lady. Some of the highest honours are being given to women in India.

The Hindu Mahásabhá (a representative Indian assembly) held at Bombay in December, 1925, passed the following resolutions, which are being kept constantly before the people:

1. "In the opinion of this conference it is pre-eminently desirable, in the best interests of the Hindu community, religious, moral, social and political, that all disabilities imposed on the women of the community by the custom of Purdah be forthwith removed; that full and free provision be made for their education in all branches of human knowledge; that monogamy be enforced; and that the marriageable ages of boys and girls be raised to 25 and 16 respectively." Since the passing of this resolution a law has been passed fixing the marriageable age at 18 and 14 years.

2. "This conference most earnestly draws the attention of the community to the extremely deplorable condition of Hindu widows and to the hardships to which they are subjected by their own people and community and calls upon all Hindus, of all sects, denominations and castes, to improve and alleviate their condition in every way possible and according to their religious belief and faiths."

3. "This conference urges the absolute necessity of immediately opening shelter homes for such Hindu women as are stranded, unprotected and unprovided for by their own relatives for any reason whatever, where facilities may be provided for such education as may be needed for their economic independence and moral uplift. And further, that one such rescue home may be immediately opened in Bombay and for starting this the following committee be appointed. . . ."

One would hardly think wide-awake people like this need a Miss Mayo's "Mother India" to tell them where they are. No one is more conscious of India's shortcomings than the people of India themselves. And there is plenty of quiet goodness in India; the only trouble is that India's quiet goodness, and for that matter no country's quiet goodness, ever gets into newspapers. Much that the West reads about India is such stuff as Miss Mayo and her kind delight in publishing, for bad news makes good newspaper "copy." The world seems to have gone crazy after sensational things. They would not report the sacrifices men like Gandhi, C. R. Dass, Lala Lajpat Rai, the Nehru brothers, and a host of

others have made, and the unifying, wholesome influences they have set in motion. But if there is tension between the Hindus and the Mohammedans, or some irresponsible person happens to do something mischievous, that news flashes across the seas, and those unacquainted with India's under-currents imagine that that is our daily football game!

It is because of this lack of knowledge of the country as a whole, and possibly sometimes also to induce the people of Europe and America to give more liberally to the cause of foreign missions, that dark and one-sided pictures have been drawn of India. Yes, sometimes it seems that tourists because of their ignorance and British nationalists in the interests of Great Britain have done the same. This process has gone so far that Europe and America have harboured queer ideas about the people of India. To illustrate:

An Indian once went to America on deputation work. He gave addresses on India, and after such an address one evening, when he was surrounded by people anxious to ask all sorts of questions about India, one little girl came up to him and said, "Say, are you an

Indian?" "Yes, girlie, what did you think I was?" "I—I thought you were a man!"

Another Indian was one day walking down a street in America. He was dressed in Indian clothes, and a number of children began to follow him. After a while this became rather embarrassing for him, so he thought he would speak a word or two with the children and dismiss them. He, therefore, turned around and said, "Well, kiddies, what do you want?" No sooner was his mouth opened than one of the stalwart urchins turned towards the company and exclaimed, "Heh, boys, it speaks!" Those of the Western world who have heard men like Vivekanand, Lajpat Rai, Tagore, Shastri, and women like Mrs. Shorojni Naidu know that we, too, are human beings very much the same as the rest of the world, and that God has given us also the gift of articulation!

I have spoken above of the mineral products of India and also of the large number of farmers who live in the villages. This would seem to indicate that India is a very rich country. There is no doubt that India as a country is rich in its resources, but the

economic condition of the people is far from satisfactory. This may be accounted for in several ways. While India is only one-thirtieth, or 1,802,656 square miles, of the world's area, it supports one-fifth of the world's population.

Then, too, India has not yet begun to use machinery like Europe and America. Even if we were to have it we should have very little use for it, as extensive farming is impossible, labour is cheap, and for several months of the year the farmer has nothing or very little to do. True, during the past years our Canal Department has effected great improvements and in some parts of India light American ploughs have also come into use. The British Government is quite alive to the need of improving agriculture, and great strides have been made, especially during the governor-generalship of Lord Irwin.

But these are not the only reasons for India's poor economic condition. India is herself partly responsible and partly the centuries of exploitation by foreigners. A good deal depends upon India herself. To my mind, if India changes her attitude towards certain things she will make great progress in the

next few years. Some of the leaders of India have been awakened to these facts and are straining every nerve to turn their backs deliberately on the customs and prejudices of the past which have been such heavy shackles on their country.

What exactly is the present economic condition of India? After a great deal of investigation India's annual income per capita has been fixed at Rupees 36 (a little less than £3 of $13.00 at the present rate of exchange). William Digby estimated it at Rs17, Gandhi and Dadabhai Nauroji at Rs20 and Lord Curzon at Rs30. Taking the highest figure, Rs36, a man gets Rs3 (£¼ or $1.00) a month, or 1½ anna per day! Think of it, less than four cents per day! How does this compare with other countries? The annual income per capita in the United States of America is Rs1080, the United Kingdom Rs750, Canada Rs600, France Rs570, Germany Rs450 and Japan Rs90. Is it any wonder then that in a city like Bombay 66 per cent. and in the mill areas 80 per cent. of the children die in infancy! In the face of this who dares rob India of anything that would contribute to better living?

What can India do? In some respects she is helpless, but in other respects, I say again, if India changes her attitude towards certain conditions that mark her life great advance will be effected.

According to the last census report, there are in India 5,800,000 mendicants, beggars, sorcerers, etc. Add to this 1,452,174 of the "holy people" of various orders who depend upon others for their support, and you have a total of 7,252,174 who do nothing but mischief and get their living out of already hard-worked and half-starved people. The fear is that if any of these "holy men" were to be turned away empty-handed from the door of any home some great calamity might come as a result of the curse he would utter. A cautious mother would, therefore, very often let her child starve rather than turn away a Sadhu, for is not a starving child better than a dead one!

In my tours in India I have seen something of this indiscreet charity, if indeed "charity" it can be called. Take the case of Brindaban, the scene of "Lord Krishna's" life and, therefore, one of the holiest places in India. There are several places in Brindaban where 1,500

Hindu widows sit together for seven solid hours and repeat "Rádhe Shám, Rádhe Shám." "Rádhe" is Krishna's consort and "Shám" is Krishna himself. This is the means of livelihood of these 1,500 widows, and, of course, of merit to the organisers of this institution, as the name of God is repeated by proxy! As they enter in the morning those coming on time get first class tickets, those a little later second class, and those last of all third class. As they go out each one shows her ticket and gets a proportionate amount of rice and cash for this seven hours' duty. The institution thus spends about Rs300 ($100) per day or Rs109,500 per year. But says someone, "should we not look after our widows?" Certainly, there is nothing more admirable than that in the sphere of charity. But a very large number of these widows are young and strong. They are quite fit for work, but the people in Brindaban told me that they constantly refuse offers of work; the reason for that refusal being obvious. What comes out of this well-intentioned but indiscreet charity can be better imagined than described.

Take another place. I went to see the Golden Temple of the Sikhs at Amritsar

(Punjab). I saw many good things there, and especially the free dispensary where a well qualified Doctor gives free treatment to all, irrespective of caste or creed. But after showing me round, my conductor took me to the free kitchen of the temple where, at that hour, about 200 people were being fed. The food was good and wholesome. When I looked at the people I saw that many of them were able-bodied and well dressed. They told me that they fed several hundred people every day and spent about Rs200 daily or Rs73,000 annually. When I pointed to some of the sturdy looking fellows my conductor smiled and said that the fact was that many of them took their two meals daily from the free kitchen and worked in the factories and other places of employment. When they see a man coming in for several consecutive days they speak to him, but, of course, it is very difficult to keep track of individuals in a crowd like that. These people get their food from the temple, spend the night on the open verandahs of shops or by the roadside. What becomes of their earnings then? You will see them every evening at the liquor shop. Needless to say, they also get into other evils associated with

drink and idleness. This same sort of thing can be seen at Juggannath Puri and other places too numerous to mention.

Then the Hindu religion forbids the taking of life, small or great. Because of this, many wild animals which are not allowed to be shot in Native States do an immense amount of harm. Not only that but India's streets are simply infested with sacred bulls and cows and dogs. In a certain Native State street dogs began to do damage both to beast and man. Someone whose expensive fowls had been carried away reported the matter to the local municipality. The mayor of the city explained to him that it was their custom to destroy all ownerless dogs every April, but that that year the Jains of the city had applied to the State Council asking that those dogs should not be killed but kept in a kennel where they would be looked after. The city municipality took a census of the dogs and found that there were at least 20,000 of them, and that at the rate of Rs3 per dog it would cost them Rs60,000 per month, and of course more as their number increased. This suggestion came from the followers of Jainism in a State town of one-hundred-thousand people!

According to the live stock census taken throughout British India in 1919-1920, there are 146,055,859 head of bovine cattle. Of these 50 per cent., at the lowest estimate, are reckoned unprofitable because of their lack of economic value. The food they consume, little as it is, is estimated to represent an annual loss to the country of Rs1,750,000,000 (roughly £117,600,000) or over four times the total land revenue of British India. It would be still more startling if statistics could be gathered of the harm done by the hundreds of thousands of monkeys which are to be found all over the country. But perhaps this is enough to give some idea how India wastes her wealth. The fact is that India is so very religious that she holds to the performance of the little details of her religious life even though these cause her to remain abjectly poor.

The parrot is a very mischievous bird, but it cannot be killed because it is a Brahman among birds and its name is Gangá Rám. Monkeys come thumping down upon our roofs, they destroy our fruit gardens and do an immense amount of harm to property and men,

but they cannot be killed because they are related to the great monkey god Hanúmán, the servant of Ráma. The striped squirrel destroys our fruits and vegetables and sometimes even our clothes, but one dares not touch it for it is the tame animal of Sítá—Ráma's consort —and bears on its back the white marks of her caressing fingers. Rats both destroy our grain in the fields and spread disease, but they are the riding animals of Ganesh the elephant God. If a herd of blue bulls (Nilgaya or huge antelopes) happens to pass through a field there is not a blade left, but how can sacred bulls and cows be molested? He who kills the cat must give a gold cat to the Brahman in his next birth. Fish and bear are among the incarnations of Vishnu. Snakes are related to the great Sheshnág (the great serpent) on whose hood the earth rests. Therefore, once in the year there should be a festival (Nágpanchamí) in their honour and they should be fed on milk. Peacocks and pigeons are sacred birds and India throws tons of grain to them. This is the result of the Boddh and Jain doctrine of Ahinsa or Non-violence.

My hope is that India will take a changed

attitude towards these matters in the near future. Yes, she has already changed her attitude in many ways and her sons are seriously taking these problems to heart. The day will come when India's economic condition will have been greatly improved.

CHAPTER II

WHO IS AN INDIAN?

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WHO IS AN INDIAN?

Who is an Indian? or To whom does India belong? are questions which can be answered with very great difficulty. What has been said of India in the first chapter would indicate that it is a very complex country. It is complex because of the diversity of races and languages, because of the numerous systems of religion, and the climatic conditions in which there is just as much diversity as there is in these other matters. In the same season you can move from the freezing climate and the eternal snows of the hills to those parts where it is hot for nine months of the year and hotter during the remaining three months!

We shall first consider the question "To whom does India belong?" The ancient history of India tells us that the primitive settlers in India were those now called the Dravidians and the Turanians. There have been numerous ramifications of these two stocks into what

are now called the Bhils, Kols, Santals, Puliyas, Muriyas, Gonds, etc. These are the aborigines of India and their number is by no means small. The Dravidian stock is found for the most part in South India, where about 95 per cent. of the people belong to this ancient stock. Their religion was originally Animism, but they now also worship the Hindu gods and goddesses.

As far as we can tell the Aryans came into India at least 1,500 years before Christ. They did not all come at one time, but that was the beginning of their immigration. They came through the passes of the Himálaya mountains and first settled down in the part of North India now called the Punjab. Authorities differ as to their origin. According to some, they came from beyond the Himálayas, from what is generally called Central Asia, and, according to others, from Eastern Europe. They drove most of the aborigines away to the poorer hilly parts of the country, where they are found to this day, and some they kept as their servants and slaves. Gradually friendly relationships were established between the aborigines and the Aryans with the result that now very few pure Aryans can

be found; probably only about 20 millions in the whole of India. According to this history, it would seem that India belongs to these aboriginal tribes who are today called the "Untouchables" and the "Panchamas" and whose very shadow is pollution for the other classes of India.

India has been subject to foreign invasions from times immemorial. After the Aryans came the Greeks, the Persians, the Turks, the Scythians, the Huns, etc. Then, for about 900 years, through the same passes of the Himálayas, came the Mohammedans, and in about 500 years they became masters of a good deal of the country. Then came the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English, not through the Himálayas but over the seas, in the shape of traders. They were constantly at war with one another, but gradually the East India Company took possession of a good deal of the country, some of India's own people having become allies of the Company, and, finally, in 1858 A.D. the reins of government passed to the British Government, who, up to this day, are the rulers of India. They did not have to conquer us, they simply organised India! India has thus been a subject nation

for centuries, and, of course, this state of affairs has killed the initiative and the spirit of independence and self-respect so necessary for self-government.

However, there is no gainsaying the fact that of all the governments which India has had the British Government is the best. It is of course not ideal, but comparatively the best. In spite of the fact that Mr. Gandhi calls the British Government "The Satanic Government" I quote him in support of my statement. Says Gandhi: "As a passive resister . . . I discovered that the British Empire had certain ideals with which I have fallen in love, and one of those ideals is that every subject of the British Empire has the freest scope for his energies and honour and whatever he thinks is due to his conscience. I think that this is true of the British Empire as it is not true of any other government. I feel, as you perhaps here know, that I am no lover of any government, and I have more than once said that that government is best which governs least. And I have found that it is possible for me to be governed least under the British Empire. Hence my loyalty to the British Empire." (Gray and Parekh, "Mahatma

Gandhi," p. 37.) Never was such progress made towards self-government as during the past hundred years. India is fast advancing towards home rule. The next twenty-five years will be very momentous. My hope is that before long that saying of Christ shall have been literally fulfilled in the case of India: "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free (JOHN 8:32). Although we cannot call India our own at the present time, nevertheless there is coming a time when India's aspirations shall have been fulfilled and the government of the country shall have been automatically passed on to her own people. This sounds like a bird in the night singing of the dawn, but the bird instinctively knows that the dawn is coming.

And now for the question "Who is an Indian?" This, too, is a problem extremely difficult of solution. You go to China and Japan and ask the question, "Who are you?" and they at once say, "I am a Chinaman or a Japanese," as the case may be. But you put that question to an Indian and he replies "Brahman, Kshatriya, Baniya (merchant), Lohar (blacksmith), Sweeper," etc. There is no national solidarity. How has it come about?

When the Aryans came into India they organised the whole society into "Varna," which literally means "colour." The "Varna" had two objects in view: First, the Aryans were of lighter colour and they began to fear intermingling of blood with the dark aborigines. Therefore, they put the colour bar and decided that there should be no intermarriages and that each class of people should live by themselves. However, this institution did not serve the original purpose for, as stated above, there are now only about 20 millions of pure Aryans. Second, they saw that some of them should give themselves to the acquiring of knowledge and the development of sciences and, in turn, pass them on to others; some should protect the country from further foreign invasions; some should till the land and carry on business and some should act as servants and attend to the more menial tasks. Thus the whole society was divided into four sections and they were accordingly called: 1. the Brahmans, 2. the Kshatriyas, 3. the Vaishayas and 4. the Shudras. This was more or less a natural division, and there are indications that even before the coming of the Aryans at least the upper three classes had existed in India.

This was "Varna," and gradually, according to these occupations, they formed into four castes. The Varna classification was, of course, wrong from the very outset, for it was based on colour prejudice, but if it had stopped there it would not have been so bad.

In the course of time a superiority complex was started. The Brahmans began to claim that they were superior in the scale of being as they had sprung from the mouth of Brahma —the Creator—the Kshatriyas were placed next below them as having sprung from the arms of Brahma, below them the Vaishyas who came out of the thighs, and, at the lowest rung, the Shudras who came from the feet. A fifth caste was added to them and it was called "Untouchable" or "Panchama." The word "Panchama" literally means the fifth. This caste now numbers about 50 millions. India thus put the label of "Untouchable" on about a sixth of its own people.

The condition of this class of people can be better imagined than described. Go south-west to the Malabar Coast of India and spend a day or two in the native state of Travancore. That and its adjacent state of Cochin, to the north, are, to my mind, the most caste-ridden

sections in India. You see there caste at its worst—castes among non-Christians and castes even in the Christian church, so much so that there have been separate caste churches in some places. You are walking on the public road. You see a man coming in front of you. He is a Nambodri Brahman, the highest among the Brahmans. From the opposite direction comes a man, and you can tell from his compulsory headdress that he is a Puliya, one of the Untouchables. Suddenly, as he draws within about a hundred yards of the Brahman he leaves the road, turns down into the knee-deep water of the paddy fields and either stands there until the Brahman has passed or walks in the field in a semi-circle to take the road again. He may have to do that a dozen times before he can get to his destination. The Brahmans there have no headdress, but the Untouchables must wear a certain kind of cap prepared out of the bark of the betel-nut tree. This serves as a warning sign.

This canker of caste has eaten into the vitals of India. That well known saying of the great Negro leader of America, Booker T. Washington, has come true in the case of India: "There is only one way to keep a man down

in the gutter and that is to stay down with him." India has degraded 50 millions of the bone of her own bone, blood of her own blood and flesh of her own flesh, and in doing so she has degraded herself. No one can degrade another without degrading oneself. I speak as an Indian, and as I speak my heart aches for my mother country.

But India did not stop even here. We began with four castes, we added a fifth and we now boast of at least 3,000 castes and sub-castes! It sounds very elaborate, but it has meant death. We got into these ruts, and a rut is a grave with both ends knocked out. Of the highest caste alone—the Brahmans—there are in India about 6 or 7 millions divided up into 1,800 sub-castes which neither inter-marry nor inter-dine! This compartmentising process has gone on until now it is difficult to find twenty families in a good-sized village which can have social intercourse with one another. This is what we have done with the mother country. Which of us has a right to be called an Indian? If to be called an Indian is a matter of honour then the Brahman would like to have the sole monopoly and he might suggest that the Puliya might be called by some

other name, but certainly not an Indian, for how can he be in the same rank with the Brahman!

This much in regard to caste; now let us look at the variety of food and clothing for a while. We will begin with upper India, somewhere near Peshawar. The people there wear a big headdress, called "Pugrí," which has a pyramid-like projection in the centre, called the "Kuláh." The pugri is usually white and the kulah red. They also wear a shirt and short European-fashioned coat and very baggy pajamas, which take almost a whole web of cloth. I asked one of them one day as to why they took so much cloth for their pajamas and the answer was: "We carry our coffin along so that when we die no one needs to spend any more money on coffin cloth! You can simply open up the pajamas and wrap up the dead body in it!"

This is their dress, what about food? One of these upper India men once came to Central India and was the guest of an Indian Christian family. When the mealtime came the host and the hostess, who were more or less vegetarian, placed before him some dál (pulse) and a couple of vegetables and rice.

The guest looked rather disappointed, and, after a moment of ominous silence, exclaimed: "Heh, I belong to the tribe of lion, why do you not give me bread and meat?" This is their food.

Let us come down a little bit to the United Provinces. The big pugri has changed into a small round felt cap and the baggy pajamas have shrunk so that they actually constrict the calves of the legs like leggings. You have to wrap a piece of paper or something slippery over your heels before you can put them on. As for food, it is about half rice and half wheat with plenty of vegetables.

Come lower still to Rajputana and Central India. The Rajputana headdress is a big pugri, about 25 feet long, lightly coloured, but without the upper India pyramid on the crown of the head. The pajamas are very little in use and the dhotí, a piece of cloth about 15 feet long, wrapped round the waist and hanging down to the ankles takes their place. Maize, millet, barley, wheat and some rice are the products of this area and, therefore, the chief means of subsistence.

Now, let us take the train east to Bengal. The Bengalis have no headdress at all and

that is why, they say, their heads are strong! Whether this be the reason or not, strong certainly they are. They have no use for the pajamas, but instead have a long flowing piece of cloth (dhotí) worn in a fashion peculiar to themselves. Only a shirt is worn and no coat. For their feet they have a kind of black slippers, called the "Calcutta slippers." They cannot do without rice and fish. When I was once in Calcutta in a Bengali home, for about a week, there was either fish or lobster in every dish. One day at the table I remarked: "You Bengalis are great fish eaters"; the reply was: "Yes, we must eat the fish or else they will eat us!"

Let us go south and spend a while in and around Madras. They do not care either to cover their heads or to wear shoes! The climate is hot and, therefore, one thin shirt is considered full dress for all occasions. The lower part of the body they cover with a four-foot loin cloth from which Paris seems to have adopted the modern scanty dress fashion! Paris may not acknowledge it, but India certainly had it before it came into vogue in Europe, with this difference, that what the men of south India wear has become the dress

of the women of Europe! Whether it is a compliment for India or Europe I do not know! The south Indian lives mostly on rice.

The peculiarity in dress and food is not only provincial but there are also caste considerations in it. The Brahman and the Vaishaya may not eat flesh, while the other two castes make no secret of either flesh-eating or drinking. The Mohammedan must have his red fez on his head, the Baniya or the merchant, who belongs to the Vaishayas, wears a headdress woven out of fine-coloured muslin made into a rope, the Rajput or the Kshatriya has a pugri peculiar to him. The fact is that the dress, and particularly the head-covering, is so peculiar that a man of common sense and one acquainted with India, going along a crowded street, can accurately tell, in 75 cases out of 100, to which caste a man belongs.

I have already mentioned that 220 languages are spoken in India. Many a time I have had to give addresses to Indian audiences in English, through a European, interpreting my address in one of the Indian languages, as I went along! I have thus been a foreigner in my own country!

Now, which of these dresses described

above is peculiarly Indian and which of the languages is Indian? None of them perhaps, and yet all of them.

Mencius, the great sage of the Chinese, has said: "A nation first smites herself and then others smite her." If India has been smitten by others it is because she has first smitten herself. However, India is now wide-awake and she has begun to cease to smite herself. No nation on earth now dare smite India. There is an effort being made to sink these differences, to forget about caste and to look upon each man as a man and as a brother. Mr. Gandhi has given a great lead in these matters. Our social reformers and legislators are doing their utmost to make India what it ought to be, and, in spite of what has been said above, one cannot fail to see a note of optimism throughout the country. Things sometimes seem dark in India and people sometimes hold us up to ridicule, but I feel certain that this darkness is the one that precedes the dawn. If there is pain in India at the present time it is the pain which the petals have to experience before flowers can be produced, but that very pain is an indication that flowers are coming. Every good has its birth

in pain. The question marks of India are being straightened out into exclamation marks.

With these two chapters as a background we shall now proceed to answer the question: "WILL INDIA BECOME CHRISTIAN?" Please keep in mind the India we have pictured, and also bear in mind that the Christianisation of India is like a painter painting a huge picture. The brush is being slowly applied, and to the untrained eye it looks like a child scribbling on a piece of paper, but wait and see the details come out, for the master mind has it all planned, and one day, when the picture is completed, it will come out in bold and beautiful design. Things are not drifting at random; God is at work in His universe. Oh for an eye to see Christ at work and for a faith to lay hold on His resources and to go forward with Him!

CHAPTER III

WHEN DID CHRISTIANITY COME TO INDIA?

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I

The Indigenous Church

On the southwest coast of India, called the Malabar Coast, there are two Native States, Travancore and Cochin. The State of Travancore is about 150 miles long and 50 miles wide, really an irregular triangle with its apex at Cape Comorin. It has a population of a little over four million and a revenue of Rs23,800,000. To its north, on the same coast, is the State of Cochin, about a quarter of Travancore in point of size and population.

In these two states is found the oldest indigenous church, now called the Syrian Church. They claim that St. Thomas, one of the twelve disciples, came to the Malabar Coast in 52 A.D., founded the church and was killed by opponents of Christianity at Myla-

pur, near Madras. There is no historic basis for this claim, although it is not altogether improbable. In the hands of their Bishops are six copper plates on which are inscribed the rights granted to these Christians, by their rulers, from time to time. One of these plates goes as far back as the third century, the rest belong to the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries. There is also the evidence of Kosmus, the Alexandrian traveller, who came to this coast in the first quarter of the sixth century, and found an organised Christian church in a flourishing condition. This fact has never been denied.

There is no doubt that the Malabar Coast has attracted many foreign nations ever since the early centuries of the Christian era. I visited a Jewish Synagogue in Cochin where the dates of the various Jewish immigrations have been very carefully preserved. From these dates I ascertained that the Jews came to that coast in 68 A.D., or two years before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. I also saw a church there in which Vasco Da Gama (1498) the great Portuguese navigator, is supposed to have worshipped. Some of the graves inside the church bear the date 1600

A.D., and on the door are inscribed the words "Renovatum Anno 1779."

In the beginning these Christians were all called "The Christians of St. Thomas," but later, with the coming of the Roman Catholics, schisms were caused until now these 1,200,000 Christians are divided into four distinct sections. About 600,000 are called Syro-Romans and Latinites, or Roman Catholics; 400,000 belong to the Jacobite section, which is again divided up into two sections (those who acknowledge both the spiritual and temporal supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch and those who acknowledge only the spiritual supremacy); 120,000 belong to the Már Thoma Church; and 80,000 have become members of the Church of England. They have their own Bishops and clergy, their own educational institutions, from primary education right up to college, and manage all their affairs themselves. They are, of course, all Indians, but are called the Syrian Church because of their connection with Antioch of Syria from which some of their early Patriarchs came.

There is a hundred per cent. literacy among them. Every child of school age goes to school.

Most of them are settled on the soil and their economic condition is very satisfactory, as they hold most of the State land and the major portion of the revenue of the States comes from these Christians. Not only that, but, although the rulers of the States are non-Christians, some of the highest positions in the States are held by the Christians. The year I visited the country nine departments of the State of Travancore out of twelve were in the hands of the Christians, and the same is true of the State of Cochin. The question naturally arises: Why is this church not better known to the world and why has it not made an impression upon non-Christian India?

There are two reasons why this Church has been dead through the centuries: First, it has harboured caste feeling. Second, it has not had an evangelistic programme. Some of the early converts were the high caste Nambodri Brahmans. They became Christians, but brought caste along. Like the Jews of old, they thought that Christianity was the sole monopoly of the Brahmans; the lower classes had no right to it. Later, when some of the

lower classes also became Christians, they were not allowed to worship in the same church with the Nambodri converts. Consequently, caste churches sprang up, and there was no Christian fellowship between the converts from among the higher classes and those from the lower classes. This idea of high and low alone was enough to spread deadness; but, what is worse, they did not have an evangelistic programme. Their numerical increase has been by the sheer process of birth. No church, of course, has a right to exist that has not a definite evangelistic programme. One cannot save oneself apart from one's task. We are only saved as we save others. And here we might well learn a lesson from this ancient Church.

However, about forty years ago there came an awakening in this Church. Some of the members wanted to introduce reforms; but the mass of the people would not agree to it. So a split was caused and a new section was formed which now goes by the name of the Már Thoma Syrian Church. They carried away with them the cream of the people and now have a membership of 120,000. One of

their Bishops, Abraham, was educated at Wycliffe College in Toronto, Canada. He really is the soul of this new movement.

In 1888 their Evangelistic Association was started and is going apace under the wise leadership of Ráo Sáhib Zecharias and Achan Philipose. Out of this was also born an annual Convention for the deepening of spiritual life. I had the privilege, about three years ago, of speaking at this convention. Thirty thousand people in a single audience, dressed in spotless white, men on one side and women on the other, reminded one of the scene depicted in the 7th chapter of the book of Revelation: "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence come they?" This great Church is now getting awakened to its responsibility to the non-Christian world, and is now training missionaries to be sent out to the various parts of India, and possibly also outside the country. If they once step out of their own bounds they will make wonderful history.

II

Modern Christian Missions

It was not until early in the eighteenth century that the Christian West began to consider the task of giving the good news to India. Zieganbalg and Plütschau who stepped ashore on July 9, 1706, were the first Protestant missionaries to set foot on Indian soil. Within about a hundred years, they were followed by Schwartz, Carey, Marshman, Ward, Duff, Wilson, Anderson and others. The modern missionary enterprise, therefore, has a history running only over about 200 years. Indeed it is only during the last fifty or sixty years that any serious effort has been made.

Two hundred years is not a very long period from which to seek tangible results, considering the vastness of the country, the teeming millions, the variety of race and language, the notorious illiteracy, the deep-rooted prejudices and superstitions, the hoary systems of religion, the un-Christian lives of many Europeans and Anglo-Indians, who live in India, and the fight with the devil himself. The fact should also be borne in mind that the number

of the pioneer missionaries who came out in the eighteenth century was so small that they could be counted on the fingers of only one hand; also that while the modern missionary can do at least some of his work through the medium of the English language that language was not then spoken in India. Until converts were won and trained they had no Indian assistants. The means of communication were limited, the first Indian railway not having been opened until 1853. The language had to be learned, the Bible translated and suitable literature produced, (the printing being done on their own press, as it was William Carey who started the first printing press in India). Much opposition had to be overcome and the confidence of the people won. In every sense it was pioneer work. The support from the home lands was meagre and irregular. Under this heavy burden some of them broke down and some died on the field.

Notably during the last fifty years Europe and America have sent some of their strongest sons and noblest daughters to India. We have today a missionary army of about 5,000 men and women. It is truly inter-national—

from the British Empire (including Canada and Australasia), United States, Germany, Sweden and Denmark. The place of honour in respect of numbers is held by the United States, whose disinterested zeal and liberality are worthy of all commendation. This missionary army, too, is inter-denominational—Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists, Lutherans, Congregationalists, Friends, etc., all, with few exceptions, working in harmony, dividing the land between them, and meeting in Provincial and National Christian Councils for mutual help. The ecclesiastical differences which bulk largely in the West are here at least minimised in the face of the great common task.

Will the sacrifices of the West both in the shape of men and money go for naught and will Christ fail in India? Will His word return unto Him void? Are Christ and Christianity not universal? Is not the human need the same the world over? We very often find it hard to perceive what is happening in India. As I write these lines I am travelling over the beautiful calm, blue Mediterranean. Sitting in my little cabin I sometimes begin

to question whether the ship is moving at all. But the captain tells me that she is pushing forward 26 feet deep and 45 feet wide at the rate of 15 knots per hour and that in three days we shall be at Marseilles! This is what is happening in India. Christ is pushing His way through tremendous forces and it is all done so quietly and gently that we in our little fields of labour sometimes begin to feel like Elijah of old: "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life." It looked as though there was the end of the whole business, the closing down of all mission work. But what was the answer of God to him? "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed their knee to the image of Baal." To see the seven thousand requires real grace. Really to see Christ at work one must go down below the deck into the engine room and feel the throb of the great machinery.

An addition of 100,000 a year to the Christian Church in India is not a small matter. During the next ten years this rate is likely to be greatly accelerated, but what is most stupendous is not so much the numerical in-

crease, as the silent leavening process, the mass movement of the mind, until India's atmosphere is becoming heavy with Christian moisture, getting ready for a cloudburst any time. In the succeeding chapters I shall try to substantiate this statement.

CHAPTER IV

THE HIGHWAYS OF CHRIST

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"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." (ISAIAH 40:3, 4.)

If religious history makes anything plain it is this fact that Christ never walks on crooked roads. Before He can come the roads must be prepared; the valleys must be exalted and the mountains and the hills made low. Christ would not, so to speak, walk in by the back door. He would stand at the door and gently and patiently knock and knock and knock until it opens for Him. This is true in the case of individuals, families, tribes, nations.

We are told that Adam used to walk with God. Sin came in, the path became crooked,

and that morning walk ceased. The path must be made straight again before the walk can be resumed. This process of preparation took millenniums. Through symbolic sacrifice and signs; through the call of Abraham and the training of the Jews; through the judges, the prophets and the priests; through Moses; sometimes through pain and sometimes through prosperity; and, finally, through John the Baptist, the path was prepared, and, in the fulness of time, "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" came.

Was it a mere matter of accident that Paul and Silas were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to spend any more time preaching the word in Asia, and was the vision and call at Troas, beseeching them to go over into Macedonia, a mere imagination? Oh no, the same principle was involved. Asia yet had many mountains and valleys to be levelled; she was, comparatively, much less prepared than Europe. On the other hand, in Europe, Greek philosophy had reached its summit, a hardy, adventurous race was ready to take in any new ideas that might appear worth while to them, commerce had opened new roads and markets had developed in strategic centres.

Hence the explicit directions to the preachers of the Gospel to cross over into Europe. Not that the Europeans were more favoured in the sight of God than the Asiatics. Rather, it was the loving purpose of the Heavenly Father to prepare a people, fitted by the circumstances and climatic conditions under which they lived, to bring back to Asia that which Asia gave to Europe as a gift.

Similarly, in India, if Christ has delayed His coming it is because India has been going through the process of preparation. That preparation has come in diverse and many ways; sometimes through avenues of which we could never have dreamed, and which even yet we fail to associate with Christ. But, of course, God's ways are not our ways and God's thoughts are not our thoughts. We shall now endeavour to trace some of the highways which have been prepared, and are being prepared, so that the King of Glory may come in.

I

The British Government

An enlightened, thoughtful Indian Christian was asked the question in America as to

whether it would make any difference in the Indian feeling if a Jew were appointed as Governor-General of India. He replied: "The British Government has been accused of many things, but she has never been accused of having been Christian." Personally, I think it would be a matter of appreciation and applause from the Indian people, rather than of accusation, if the British Government acted like a real Chrstian. India highly appreciates true Christianity. The fact of the matter is that the human heart is essentially Christian. Whether it is a Hindu's heart or a Mohammedan's heart makes no difference, for all men have been made by Christ, and everything coming from His hand cannot be anything but Christian. Christ appeals to the human heart as light appeals to the eyes, truth to conscience and beauty to the æsthetic nature.

The British Government, as such, and also its representatives here in India, have sometimes acted as if they knew nothing of the principles of Christ, and that attitude always comes as a shock to religiously-minded India. Just recently an old, enlightened Hindu State official said to me: "We do not hate the Eu-

ropeans. We want as many of them in India as would like to come, provided they come in the spirit of Christ." The proviso is worthy of thought. The spirit of Christ is essentially the spirit of service. India touches the feet of men like C. F. Andrews and crowds gather by the thousand to listen to deep Christian messages from men like E. Stanley Jones. I think it is good statesmanship for a government to remain neutral in religious matters in a country like India, but one sometimes wonders what prevents the British Government from sending out to India men who are distinctly Christian rather than the present-day loathers-of-religion-and-water type. Does England really want India to remain within the British Empire? Then she must send to India only the deeply religiously-minded men, for it is the religiously-minded that have a hold on India rather than the materialistic, dominating type. Forced obedience or even outward friendship on the part of India will never be of any use to England.

This much by way of criticism. But, in fairness to Europe, I must also say that she has sent from time to time men who have left a deep impression upon India; men who in

times of famine and the plague have sacrificed their lives on the altar of service. I know of a Collector (a district officer) the poor people of whose district called him "Padri Lee." A compliment both for the Padri and the Collector! There is no denying the fact that, with all its shortcomings, the British Government has been a highway for the coming of Christ to India.

I do not think that it was a matter of accident that the British Government came to India. It was all a part of the programme of God for the redemption of mankind. Think of what the India of today would have been if the Mohammedan rule had continued; and what impression a Mohammedan India would have made upon the rest of the world.

Some of the thinking sons of India have begun to see the point. Says Professor Govind Das, of the Benares Hindu University, in his book "Hinduism," page 35: "The one really hopeful force at work, which may save the situation, is the steady unrelenting pressure from outside. 'Adapt or perish' are the only two alternatives allowed. The English domination of the country has forced us into contact with modern civilisation which is moulding

us on cosmopolitan lines, much to our good, so far as the narrowing and intellect-deadening effects of 'Orthodoxy' are concerned. For, however pledged to religious neutrality the British Government may be, it is by its very genius, as well as by the force of circumstances, actively, if indirectly, undermining ignorance and superstition." Of course, wherever ignorance and superstition is undermined the mountains and the valleys are levelled and a highway for Christ is prepared.

Here is another statement of a Hindu teacher and graduate of the Allahabad University: "Whatever we may say about the British Government there is this, that we people of Garhwal who only saw wild beasts here now see men come to us with enlightenment."

The British Government has been a great unifying force in India. It has brought the East and the West into closer fellowship. India has now become the supreme meeting place of the East and the West. Here Europe and America's sons and daughters meet and mingle with India at her best. This has brought about a new international situation. India has become the great interpreter of the

West to the East and the East to the West.

Because of the great conglomeration of languages, English is fast becoming the common language of educated India. The young men and women sit in the classroom with English and American professors and imbibe the ideas of Shakespeare and Milton. Western civilisation through Western literature is being poured into all the channels of Indian life. Macaulay, by whose Minute of 1835 through the influence of a missionary, Alexander Duff, it was decreed that English was to be the medium of India's education, wisely and nobly conceived the future: "It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown our system; that by good government we may educate our subjects into capacity for better government; that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may in some future age demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come, I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it—whenever it comes it will be the proudest day in England's history." That day is fast approaching.

The roads, the railways, the motor bus, the

postal system, the telephone, the telegraph, the wireless, the radio, the air service and many other things, too numerous to mention, are annihilating distance and making the world look like a family. Kipling was wrong when he said: "The East is East and the West is West, And never the twain shall meet." Sitting in an Indian Club House in the jungles of the Central Provinces, forty miles off the railway, I listened in over the radio one Sunday evening to a sermon which was being preached in Calcutta, 500 miles away, on the "Lamb of God." The non-Christians too were listening in and getting the Christian message through the radio. Is not the radio Christian? I believe that electricity is Christian, the locomotive is Christian, the roads, the post office, the three great elements—the wind, the water, the fire—are all Christian; *i.e.* in their original sources and in so far as they serve the wise purposes of God.

Western ideas did not revolutionise India overnight. It has been a slow but steady process. The dead hand of the past has been so heavy upon India that it has taken a long time to shake it from its position and, of

course, it is not yet entirely removed. As recently as twenty-five years ago, one of the native chiefs of India had to go to England to present his case in Parliament. He took a large quantity of water from the "Mother Ganges" along so that he might not have to drink the "impure" water of the West! His Brahman cook went with him to give him the Hindu food with the usual everyday ceremoniousness; and, it is said that he even took some of the Indian earth so that, as far as possible, he might sit and walk only on Indian soil! Now many of the well-to-do people of India spend six months every year in England!

The Prime Minister of a Native State, a Brahman from Kashmir, told me that about twenty-five years ago the first young man from his caste went out to Europe for study. When, having completed his studies he returned to India, better equipped mentally, to serve her, his caste people ostracised him. In his dilemma he approached the leaders of his caste and humbly asked them what he should do to atone for this sin which he had committed. They prescribed that he should seek out a hollow tree, fill the hollow with pure

cow ghee (clarified butter) stand in it and set fire to it. If he came out alive he would be received back into the caste, if he perished it would be understood that the gods were not pleased with his action! Needless to say, the young man decided to remain outside the caste! Now hundreds of Indian students go to England, America, Germany and other countries and it does not cause a ripple. The British Government has also opened the Western gateways to India for commerce, and in pursuit of that end many come into close contact with the Western world.

Says Professor Govind Das: "The period covering the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries after Christ has been and continues to be a very critical one in the history of India. On our answer to the many insistent questions now being raised depends our future. The present constitutes one of those occasions in the life of the Indian people when by a right choice it can immeasurably hasten its evolution on the path of progress and enlightenment, or retard it woefully by wrong choice. There has been a tremendous awakening, in all departments of the national life, political, social, etc., especially since the

close of the Great European War in November, 1918.

"Forces are at work, which are re-energising the many and various races which inhabit this vast country and form the Indian people. A sense of national solidarity and of national self-respect has arisen, and if these are to find expression in a new lease of healthy life, in things more substantial and permanent than more or less vague philosophic truisms for the platform, or sharp political controversies and struggles which may provide immediate palliatives for present maladies, we must make a thorough overhauling of our whole organism, our whole way of living, our whole 'culture,' and cleanse it diligently of all the degenerate tissue and toxic stuff that has gathered therein." "A new order of things for India is obviously willed by Providence, by its bringing together of the East and the West." "The newborn individualism is striving for freedom—not only from the trammels of a historical religion—but is also attempting to grasp power all round, so as to secure room for a full expansion of all its latent powers. In their preliminary dimness of vision, the people cannot distinguish between friend and foe, right and

wrong. In their blind dislike and fear of things western the swing of the pendulum has brought a reactionary mood, and produced the 'gush' over things eastern which we hope will pass off and give place to equilibrium, balance and sanity." (Hinduism, pp. 1, 2, 36, 37.)

In view of the above facts and many others which space forbids mentioning I believe that the British Government, and, through it, the impact of the West upon the East, has helped the levelling process in India and prepared a highway for Christ.

II

Mr. Gandhi and His Movement

People have sometimes made wild statements in regard to Mr. Gandhi. They have gone so far as to call him "the greatest Christian living," etc. It is, of course, not for mortal beings to adjudicate in a personal matter like this, but the fact remains that Mr. Gandhi himself frankly acknowledges that as yet he is only a seeker after truth and has not found God. Like the rest of the Hindus, he believes that it may take him ages to find Reality. He

also makes no secret of the fact that he depends upon the Gita rather than upon the New Testament for his spiritual food. I have twice visited his institution (Ashram) at Sabarmati (Gujarat) and have attended the prayer meetings which are held both morning and evening. The name of Ráma occupies a prominent place and it is repeated in unison. However, as you sit and talk with this great little man and go about the Ashram you cannot help noticing the deep saturation with the ideas and principles of Christ.

At a plastic age Mr. Gandhi received his higher education in Europe and it has left its indelible mark upon him. He is a great admirer of Christ, and there was a time in his life when he wavered between Hinduism and Christianity. He has more than once conducted a Bible study class for the inmates of the Ashram and the students of the national university. This servant of India, though frail in body but frank and bold and sincere in spirit, has probably done more to prepare a highway for Christ than many years of missionary work could have done, especially among the intelligentsia of India. And what educated India thinks today the villages will

think tomorrow. I quote below the testimony of an experienced evangelistic missionary in upper India:

"1922 was another year when our faith was rather sorely tried. This was the year when the non-co-operation movement was at its peak. The Prince of Wales was due to arrive in Rawalpindi three weeks after our evangelistic Campaign week. The authorities were anxious to avoid trouble as far as possible and congress and Caliphate Committees and Non-co-operators were having things pretty much their own way. Once or twice during the winter stones were thrown during the service and at times the attitude of the crowds made preaching almost impossible. The whole programme of Mr. Gandhi, however, created a great seed bed for the sowing of the Gospel. His act of faith in promising India Swaraj (Home Rule) within a year if the people would follow through on his programme of non-violent non-co-operation was having a profound effect. The essential soundness of his promise produced a need and a hunger that seemed to be filled by the Gospel. The power of life in Christ to make possible a life of loving, non-violent non-co-operation was

real and good news to the India of 1921-22. The programme and challenge of Mr. Gandhi was indeed bringing results.

"One day after a lot of trouble in the bazaar followed by stone throwing it looked as though something would have to be done. We felt that an appeal to the police or the district Collector at that time would simply result in an order to stop preaching. All of us knew that to stop our programme that year because of intimidation would have results far-reaching. One of our workers finally suggested a visit to the office of the Congress Committee. I went there, told the secretary something of the programme the Christians were carrying out and also that Congress volunteers were in the crowd that was giving us trouble. Since they were clamouring for rights of free speech they ought to be willing to give the same privilege to others, particularly as we were not attacking or interfering with anyone. He agreed with what I said, protested that no volunteers could have been in the crowd and promised to send Congress volunteers to our preaching to help keep order.

"A week later we were having the roughest time of the whole winter. One speaker after

another had been howled down. I was the last on the list and was having no better success than the others. At the height of the uproar the Congress Secretary turned up. He asked me to let him take my place on the bench. Then he went after the crowd, told them they were disgracing their country, that none was forced to listen, that if anyone wanted to become a Christian he was free to do it as it was his own affair. When he finished he asked them to stay to listen to what I had to say. I had the best audience of the year after that."

Mr. Gandhi puts into practice what he preaches. You go to his Ashram at Sabarmati. Nearly 300 people, men, women and children, drawn from the various castes—from the Brahman down to the Untouchable—a few Mohammedans and occasionally a Christian, university graduates and the illiterate, live and mingle freely without distinction. At meal hours they all sit together and eat from the same kitchen, so that the Brahman eats the food prepared by the Untouchable and *vice versa.* To set an example in regard to the doing away of "Untouchability" Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi have adopted an "Untouchable" girl as their own daughter, who lives with and

shares the life of the family. He preaches that there should be no high and low. The lowest class of people are the Sweepers or scavengers. They must be raised to the level of the Brahman. But as long as the work of scavenging continues to be delegated to this class of people there will be the Sweeper caste. Therefore, the only way to do away with it is to do the work yourself. Consequently, the scavenging of the Ashram is done in turn by the inmates themselves.

I have before me a copy of the printed rules of the Ashram. It says: "The object of the Ashram is that its members should qualify themselves for, and make a constant endeavour towards, the service of the country, not inconsistent with the universal welfare." The following observances are enjoined as essential for the fulfilment of this object: Truth, Non-violence or Love, Chastity, Control of the palate, Non-stealing, Non-possession or Poverty, Physical Labour, Swadeshi (use of home made articles), Fearlessness, Removal of Untouchability, Tolerance.

These are just highways for Christ. The Brahman, like the mountain, is being brought low; and the Untouchable, like the valley, is

being raised. A great levelling process is taking place. The King of kings is coming to India.

III

The Shuddhi Movement

The word "Shuddhi" means cleansing or purifying. When a Hindu of a high caste eats with another of a lower caste, or when he takes a trip to the West, he has to be "purified" through the rite of "Shuddhi." The rite of "Shuddhi" usually consists of a bath in the sacred waters of the River Ganges, or one of the other sacred rivers, and swallowing a pill composed of the five products (milk, curds, clarified butter, dung, urine) of the "Mother Cow," as she is respectfully called. Sometimes certain parts of the Hindu sacred scriptures are recited, and, in the case of the upper three castes, the sacred thread is put on. This was the ceremonial meaning of the word "Shuddhi."

With the national awakening in India, and the inauguration of the Provincial and Federal Councils in accordance with the new "Reforms" granted by government there came

also the communal consciousness. The Hindus began to count their forces, and the Mohammedans did the same. While busy at this computation it came to the mind of some Hindus that as far back as 1658 A.D. the Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb and his colleagues had forced a very large number of Hindus, especially Rajputs (Kshatriyas) of royal families, to embrace Mohammedanism and that a large number of the offspring of these converts were still, at least nominally, Mohammedans. They hit upon the idea of bringing them back home through the rite of "Shuddhi." These Hindu converts were ready enough to get back home, but the difficulty was that for such heinous offences as a change of one's religion the rite of "Shuddhi" was unavailing, and, besides, they had so long been Mohammedans to all intents and purposes that all hope of restoration was gone. However, in these days of national zeal and communal advancement some of the progressives are prepared to cast into oblivion even some of the rigid old laws of religion, if only their purpose would be served! So they extended to these converts the privileges of the "Shuddhi." They thus received back some thousands of them.

This caused some concern in Mohammedan circles, but the Mohammedan blood really began to boil when they saw that the Arya Samajists (a Hindu reforming sect whose cry is "Back to the Vedas") had joined hands with the Hindus and were carrying on a regular propaganda, converting all sorts of Mohammedans. This made the situation very serious. The Mohammedans started a counter-movement called "The Tablig" (propagation of religion). Each side began to pull for itself. Mohammedans began to convert Hindus and Hindus Mohammedans.

Relations between these religionists became very strained. The result is that instead of the Hindu-Moslem Unity, which was so enthusiastically advocated in the days when the Sultanate and the Caliphate were trembling in the balances, you now read in the papers of Hindu-Moslem discord. This in brief is the history of the movement. It has not yet ended. Regular, organised propaganda on both sides goes on and what further developments there will be no one can tell. However, it is most interesting, though distressing, to watch it.

My purpose, however, in writing on this subject is not merely to tell its history, but of

its bearing on the work of the Gospel in India. Is this a highway for Christ? Hinduism has always been a strong, impregnable fortress. It was supposed to have no doors. Nobody could come out of it and nobody could go into it. Those that were there were born there. Now the Shuddhi Movement broke a door into this fortress. It began to allow people to come in. But, if they could come in, they could, of course, also go out. So that, unwittingly, in allowing the people to come in, they made it possible for them to go out; and those who had got tired of the centuries of the four walls around them at once began to see the way to freedom.

When I was in Benares—one of the strongest centres of Hinduism where they have the Hindu University—holding evangelistic meetings, some of the higher class boys of the London Mission High School were talking with their Christian Head Master. The Head Master said to the boys: "Young men, I cannot make you understand exactly what Christ is like. I cannot explain to you the taste of candy if you have never tasted anything sweet. To know the taste you must eat it. Likewise, to know what Christ is like you must taste

Him." Some of the students at once said: "Yes, we would like to become Christians, at least for a while so that when we are in the Christian community we may see how we all feel." "Yes," said others, "and if that does not prove good enough we can go back to Hinduism for the Shuddhi has opened the way for us." You see, then, its bearing on Christianity. It has made these high caste people freer to try Christ. And, after all, that is what we want. We want them to taste and see the goodness of Christ before they enter the church through the rite of baptism. It has loosened the hold of Hinduism upon the people. That is one thing, but there are other interesting features also.

The Hindus are trying to undermine Mohammedanism and the Mohammedans are trying to undermine Hinduism. We know that neither of them rests on solid rock foundation, and the ultimate result must be the downfall of both, indeed they are already crumbling. In the Agra district and some parts of Rajputana, where this movement has been in its greatest force, Hindus and Mohammedans have been having religious debates, and one of the conditions of these debates always is

that whichever party is defeated must embrace the religion of the other. Several parties, mostly Hindus, have thus had to become Mohammedans. This, of course, to a Christian is ridiculous, because to him religion is a matter of the heart and experience and not merely of intellect. We have, however, seen the result of these debates. Hindus thus becoming Mohammedans have not found satisfaction in their new religion, and are turning to Christ who alone can satisfy the longings of their souls. The writer has come across several such cases.

Let us see in the "Shuddhi Movement" the workings of God's Spirit, let us thank God for it and pray that it may mean the "Shuddhi" of the soul of many thousands of people in these days of unprecedented awakening in India.

IV

The Decay and Fall of Brahmanism

The tremendous hold of Brahmanism upon the two hundred and twenty million Hindus and its proverbial selfishness and greed have

kept India at least five hundred years behind the times, if not more. What ray of hope can one see in the proverb: "It is better to walk than to run, to sit down than to walk, to lie down than to sit up, to sleep than to be awake, and best of all is death." Why does not India move faster than she does? One of the main reasons is the grip that the doctrine of Karma (Fatalism) has, with its consequent endless chain of births and re-births. Every deed has its corresponding reward, to receive which one is bound to be re-born. Every thing is fixed and static; man can change nothing. When a Hindu grapples with some difficult task and does not succeed he taps his forehead, sits down in despair and says: "What can I do, the deeds of my previous birth were bad, I am now reaping their fruit." Another feature of Hinduism that has retarded India's progress has been the place and power of Brahmanism.

The Brahmans claimed that, as they had sprung from the mouth of Brahma, the creator, they were, so to say, his mouthpiece. Therefore, whatever the Brahman says must be right and must be obeyed at all cost. They thus had the advantage of handing down such revelations to the people as were best suited to

their own interests. In the course of time they began to be looked upon as gods and the people actually called them "Brahman Devata," the word "Devata" meaning a god. They made a code of laws with special rights for themselves. Here are some of them:

The Brahman is the lord of the universe; everything in the universe is made for him. The Kshatriyas occupy the thrones, but they do so at the bidding of the Brahmans for the Brahmans have no time to attend to that part of the world's business. The Shudra has no right to accumulate property or to possess anything. If he does, the Brahman can take it by force, and there is no harm in doing so as, after all, everything belongs to the Brahman, and in taking it he simply takes back what was originally his own. There are three special duties of the Kshatriyas and the Vaishayas: 1. To study the Vedas, 2. To offer sacrifices, 3. To give gifts. But the Brahmans have six special duties: 1. They alone can teach the Vedas, 2. Through them alone can sacrifices be offered, 3. They alone can receive gifts; the remaining three being the same as for the Kshatriyas and the Vaishayas.

A lie is permissible to save a Brahman. If a

Shudra borrows he must pay interest at the rate of 50 per cent., a Kshatriya 15, Vaishaya 20, and the Brahman only 10. A Brahman has the right to force a Shudra to serve him, as Brahma made the Shudra for that purpose. If a Shudra should use abusive language to a Brahman his tongue must be chopped off. If someone should try to counsel a Brahman hot oil must be poured into his ears and mouth. No matter how grievously guilty a Brahman may be he cannot be killed; he can only be turned out of the kingdom, unhurt and with all his belongings. Men from all other castes can be sacrificed, but not so the Brahman. There is no greater sin than taking a Brahman's life; therefore the king should not even dream of it. The reason for this is that all the gods dwell in the Brahman, and if he should be killed there will be no place of abode left for the gods. If someone should strike him even with a straw he will have to be re-born 21 times. Howsoever hungry a king may be he cannot borrow from a Brahman. If a Brahman should find buried treasure it is all his, but if a king should find it he must give half to a Brahman.

The Brahmans were the brain of society

and society had to go whichever way this brain led it. Everything belonged to the Brahman and everything was made for him. From birth till death, and even after death, nothing could be done without him. At the birth of a child he would prepare the horoscope which would tell them at what auspicious time and under what star the child was born; hence what he would become and how he would die. When the child became of school age the Brahman would, of course, be the teacher, and at the appointed time he would invest him with "Janev," the sacred thread. He would be the go-between to find a suitable life-partner for the child. In ordinary affairs of everyday life he must be consulted, for he alone can tell when it is auspicious to start on a journey or to transact business or to sow seed in the field or to gather in the harvest. After death whatever you want to send to the soul of the departed can easily get there through the medium of the Brahman. Thus the Brahman has had a hold upon the entire life of a man and nothing could be done without him.

With 7,000,000 Brahmans in India one can readily see what far-reaching results there

would be if forces could be set in motion that would liberate the people from this top-heavy and crushing system of Brahmanic Popedom. It is indeed remarkable how the people of India have stood it so long. However, under the searchlight of Western civilisation and with the British Government at the head of Indian affairs it is no longer possible for the Brahmans to work on the credulity of the people to assert their authority. If a Brahman and a Shudra are found guilty of the same crime they both grind together at the same mill in the jail. In the railway trains and the motor buses he must sit alongside of the "Untouchable" if he is to keep pace with the times in India. This has disillusioned both the Brahman and his worshippers. On the one hand, the Brahmans now full well realise that they can no longer count on the charity of the people as their priests. On the other hand, the Hindu laity are coming back upon the Brahmans with a nemesis. Hence the Brahman and the non-Brahman parties and the acute tension between them. The revolt has come and India is becoming emancipated from the thraldom of Brahmanism. An educated non-Brahman,

travelling with me on the train some time ago said: "I would sooner embrace a Sweeper than a Brahman."

In the Central Provinces there is a Hindu landlord whose custom is to give a certain portion of his produce, annually, for some charitable purpose. One year he decided to put up a new temple in his village with this money. As an empty temple is no good, two of the local Brahmans seized the opportunity and became the priests of this temple. After a year's experience this landlord said, "I have done nothing but provided for two lazy Brahmans; this year I am going to give a feed to the inmates of the leper asylum." This is an indication of India's new life and new movement—the rasing of the mountains to the ground and the filling of the valleys.

This history of Brahmanism reminds us of the early Roman Catholic Church. The Popes and their agents acted in this same manner. Instead of being a means of uplift to the Christian Church, in some periods, they actually degraded it. The Brahmans, therefore, are parallel to the hierarchy of the old Roman Catholic Church in its degenerate period. And just as in the sixteenth century through

Martin Luther Protestant Christianity was inaugurated, so in this twentieth century through many media a Protestant Hinduism is being born. There is a tremendous process of elimination of old ideas and assimilation of new going on in India, and, under the present conditions, the rate of this process is daily increasing. This will help India make great strides in the near future. India is listening to "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

V

The Modern Indian Literature

Twenty-five years ago, in Central India, a Hindu young man bought a copy of the Gospel of St. Luke in Hindi from the local catechist; the next day he was put out of caste. Enraged non-Christians would often show their contempt by purchasing the Christian Scriptures from colporteurs and tearing them to pieces in their sight. Today many non-Christians have taken to writing on the various phases of Christ's life and even translating

the New Testament into their vernaculars. Quoting the Christian Scriptures both in public speeches and in the press is a matter of everyday occurrence. I give below a few instances out of hundreds which I could quote:

I have before me a copy of a Hindi book of 147 pages entitled "Mahátmá Isá" (Jesus the Great Souled). It has been written by a high class Hindu, and printed and published in Benares (a stronghold of Hinduism) by a Hindu firm. On the cover of the book is a picture of Christ on the cross. The book contains a life of Christ written in dramatic form. Here and there, of course, are colourings of the Hindu mind, as for example, the writer makes Christ come to Benares to get his learning from the learned Pandits there. But this is the way the book ends up: "The great Father has accepted the sacrifice of Jesus. Now His followers need fear nothing. He will endure as long as the earth receives light from the sun. The stars in the heavens are laughing. The waves in the sea are dancing for joy. All of you keep on endeavouring. One day the whole world will follow Jesus. Victory to Jesus."

I have another book before me. This book is

also in Hindi and is entitled "Saral aur Sachitra Kahániyán" (Easy and Illustrated Stories). It has been written by Pandit Narmada Prasad Misra, B.A., a non-Christian, learned in the Hindu Scriptures. The printers and publishers are also Hindus. There are 36 short biographies in it, including those of Vasco Da Gama, Clive and Queen Victoria. But what interests me is that about the centre of the book is a picture of Christ, with men, women and children gathered around Him, and a short account of His life, entitled "Jesus Christ." As I read it I can hardly tell whether it is written by a Hindu or a learned Christian theologian. There is not a touch of non-Christianity about it, and throughout the language breathes of profound reverence and adoration. The book ends with this paragraph:

"Jesus knew of this (the crucifixion) and He was also ready for it. Finally, one night, when He was in a garden, some Jews came and having arrested Him took Him away. In the court the accusation was brought against Him that He called Himself the Son of God and kept the people from giving the taxes, and many other accusations of that kind. The judge knew that Jesus Christ was absolutely

innocent, but the Jews threatened the judge very greatly and, therefore, being helpless, he handed over Jesus Christ to be crucified. After this the soldiers put a crown of thorns over His head and an old purple robe on Him, and mocking and bowing before Him said, 'Hail, King of the Jews.' Jesus Christ kept silence. Nails were driven into His hands and feet and He was hung on a wooden cross. There He prayed to God for His enemies: 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' The meaning of this was that the Jews did not know that He is the Son of God. This was about noon, but at that very time such great darkness came that the day was turned into night; the earth began to shake and the mountains were rent. The veil of the temple got torn right through the centre. Seeing this the people were greatly astonished and some of them began to say, 'Truly this is the Son of God.' After a while Jesus Christ gave up the ghost saying, 'Father, I intrust my spirit to Thy Hands.' The religion which this great man has founded is called Christianity, and one-fourth of the population of the world follows it. The teachings of this religion are found in the book called the Bible."

This book has been sanctioned by the Board of High School Education of the Central Provinces for use as a Supplementary Text-Book in Class V of Middle Schools of the Central Provinces and Berar. It does not require much imagination to see how far its influence will go.

Mr. Gandhi has a Hymn Book, printed in Hindi at the end of which are found the following six Christian hymns in English:

1. Take my life and let it be
2. Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom
3. When the mists have rolled in splendour
4. Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee
5. Rock of ages, cleft for me
6. When I survey the wondrous cross

What may we not expect when fundamental Christian ideas, such as are contained in the above hymns, get into the singing of the intelligentsia of India? Notice also the careful selection and the climactic order in which they have been put.

At Ellore, South India, there lives a wealthy landlord whose name is Raja M. Bhujanga Rao. He is a Hindu in the sense that he is not a baptised member of the or-

ganised Christian Church. On his letter sheets and envelopes is an embossed picture of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane. Below the picture are printed the words, "Love thy God and thy neighbour as thyself." He has translated and printed into Telugu verse the whole of the New Testament. This translation is being extensively used in South India. When the translation was completed he sent out a printed circular to announce it. I quote a few sentences from it: "I am now glad to announce to you that, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I am able to complete the translation of the whole of the New Testament. So it is my duty to publish a well got-up edition of the New Testament in Telugu verse. It took ten years' hard labour for me to finish the translation. I am now engaged in the printing of the same. I have advanced all the money needed for its publication."

Appreciations of this translation have come to him from hundreds of people. I quote below only two—one missionary and one official:

The Right Reverend Bishop V. S. Azariah: "It is for him purely a labour of love, and I am sure Telugu readers will recognise the warm sympathy, admiration and devotion with

which the author has approached this self-imposed task. I wish the Raja every success in his effort."

Anantarama Iyer, B.A., P.C.S., Under Secretary to the Government of Madras: "I have just looked into the Sermon on the Mount and am inclined to think that you have really enriched the Telugu literature. Few have done more for Telugu than you."

We Christians, both of the East and the West, generally use the ordinary Christmas card for sending greetings to our friends, but not so the Raja. Every year he takes time and writes a little tract on some phase of Christ's life and teaching and sends it to his friends, both Christian and non-Christian, with his Christmas greetings. I have a number of them with me. In 1922, he wrote on "God is Love," in 1923, on "Divine Incarnation," 1924, "The Glory of Christ's Sacrifice," last Christmas, 1929, "Redemption."

In 1917, he wrote a small tract entitled "Political, Social and Religious Situation in India in 1917" which ends up with the following paragraph: "Therefore, my countrymen, considering the present depraved and degraded social and political condition of the people of

India, I venture to suggest to you the advisability of accepting Christ as your personal Saviour, and save yourself and your country from the social tyranny, political degradation, lack of enlightenment, and above all obtain life eternal. Except through Him you have no hope of ever improving socially, and without social amelioration there can be no political salvation."

Christ is coming through the highway of literature which is being produced by non-Christians. Twenty years ago I could not buy space in the non-Christian papers for a Christian article, now I am constantly receiving requests from editors of non-Christian papers for such articles and the editorials are replete with Christian quotations.

Lest, however, the picture should appear overdrawn and too rosy. I must say that this does not mean that all modern literature is permeated with Christianity or that nothing is being written against Christ. No, this is simply the levelling process. There are a good many mountains yet that have to be brought low and a good many valleys which must be filled. In one of my public meetings for non-Christians, after two days of lectures, the Arya

Samaj people got rather alarmed and felt things were going a little too far. So they began to distribute their literature, and handed me a tract in Hindi: "Padri sahib se bacho" (Beware of the Padri), I suppose as a protest against my meetings! There is also the book by Thakur Kahan Chandra Varma: "Jesus Christ a Myth."

But this literature, however opposed it may be to Christianity, helps to advertise Christ rather than belittle Him in any way in the eyes of educated India. I have gone to places where my series of evangelistic meetings were preceded by lectures against Christianity, and in some instances counter-meetings were organised at the same time and within a hundred yards of where I was speaking, and yet I have had the building packed with attentive listeners.

VI

Cinemas, Boy Scout, Girl Guide, Red Cross, Baby Welfare, Etc.

The above mentioned movements are of very recent date in India. They were not

started with any thought whatsoever of preparing a highway for Christ; nor even today are they looked upon by many as such. Nevertheless, the fact is that they are proving to be a great highway for Christ.

The cinemas in India are now showing films like "Quo Vadis," "Ben Hur," "The Ten Commandments," "The King of Kings," etc. I have been to these shows and have seen the place packed with non-Christians. When the film "The King of Kings" came to my own town of Indore (Central India), in spite of the fact that they had two shows every evening and the ordinary rates were enhanced, Christians and non-Christians alike came a long time beforehand to secure seats. By a strange coincidence the film was shown in the "Krishna Cinema," or the cinema dedicated to and called after the Hindu god Krishna. On the walls all around were large representations of the god, and yet here in this building the "Kings of Kings" was wringing tears alike from the eyes of Christians and non-Christians when the scene of the cross was being depicted! Throughout the show there was a solemnity such as is absent in ordinary shows, and

when Christ arose from the grave they solemnly and joyously clapped for Him.

The Boy Scout and the Girl Guide Movements are taking hold of India. In principle they are essentially Christian, and it is only to be expected that they would help to disarm prejudice and to put Christian ideas at the centre of things. In the Scout and Guide camps, boys and girls from all castes and creeds drill together and mingle freely, eating, sitting, walking, living together, thus breaking away from those shackles of caste, etc., which have gone so far to disunite India. Listen to what Mr. P. J. H. Stent, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner of Chhindwara, C.P., said about this movement, in his speech, at the Swedish Mission's Jubilee held on April 4, 1928: "I need not, I think, enumerate many instances to show how Christianity is influencing Indian thought. The Boy Scout Movement is instinct with its spirit and has found a remarkable welcome among the youth of India. The *Sewa Samiti,* its Indian counterpart, is founded on the idea of service. The attitude towards the depressed classes, the Indian Welfare Movement, the emancipation of women, the zeal for social reform—all these are sig-

nificant of the awakening of India, and I make bold to claim that it was Christianity—Christian Mission Work, Christian teaching, Christian literature and Christian lives—which stirred the sleeper from his lethargy."

A Brahman Scout Master took his Scouts to a camp. While tramping out one day the sole of his shoe came off. As soon as he noticed it, like a good Scout Master, he sat down and began to repair it. By chance another Brahman passed by and seeing him repair his own shoe remarked with horror: "Panditji (an honorific title for Brahmans) you, a Brahman, doing an Untouchable's work." The Scout Master straightened himself out and said, "Yes, I am a Brahman, but I am also a Scout Master."

Even through the Red Cross and the Baby Welfare Movements the levelling process is helped. In many places the non-Christian members of the Red Cross go out into the villages and in times of sickness and epidemic distribute quinine, potassium permanganate and other medicines and otherwise minister to the needs of the sick. At the Baby Welfare centres the children of Brahmans and Untouchables alike are cared for, entered for

competitions and weighed in the same balances! This is a real levelling process, the bringing down of the high and the raising of the low until all distinctions are wiped out and just pure, simple humanity is left.

VII

The Joint-Family System

The joint-family system in India is a very ancient institution. It dates back from the time when for lack of a central and supreme government and consequent danger to life and property, and when for lack of means of communication and consequent handicap on trade, families had to live together in order that they might be the better fitted to protect themselves from raids by stronger groups. When a young man married he did not take his bride to an independent home where she would be the mistress of her home and run her own business, but to a joint-family, often composed of a hundred members, in which the eldest male member would be the head of the family and the eldest lady the mistress of the home. The purse was common and the earn-

ings of all the members went into it. They were fed from the family kitchen and clothed and financed, according to their various needs, from the same common purse. They all had to follow the same religion and work under the direction of the head of the family. Ostracism from a family was like banishment and forfeiture of all claims to inheritance. One can, therefore, readily see how difficult it would be for any single member of a family to publicly live according to one's religious convictions if those convictions happened to conflict with the time-honoured convictions of the family. To become a Christian, under those circumstances, meant certain expulsion from the family and disinheritance, and also, sometimes, death.

What is happening now? Of course under the British Government it is no longer necessary for any family to guard itself against another. Improved communications and knowledge of the rest of the world have opened the way for trade, and, therefore, expansion of families. But, more than anything else, the tendency towards government service has now almost broken the old joint-family system. When a young man takes up a govern-

ment job he is sometimes posted far away from the rest of his kith and kin. He, therefore, has to take his wife and children along and make a separate home. This, of course, makes it impossible for him to put his earnings into the common purse of the joint-family or to receive his support from there. Consequently, the old family hold is loosened and greater freedom of following one's own conviction given. It is, of course, much more easy for a family of three or four to become Christians than for a whole crowd of a hundred people tied together by the family bonds. This is my reason for looking upon the breaking up of the old joint-family system as a preparation of a highway for Christ.

VIII

Modern Religious Movements

It is not my intention to give a history of the Modern Religious Movements. For that purpose the reader is referred to Dr. J. N. Farquhar's admirable book "Modern Religious Movements in India." What I wish simply to state here is that my study of the subject

has led me to believe that all Modern Religious Movements in India since the beginning of the nineteenth century have received their impulse from Christianity. Some of them have openly acknowledged it; others may not do so.

The impact of the West and the work of Christian Missions in India served as a searchlight under which the people of India began to see that the old systems were not good enough for the new day. They were somewhat dissatisfied with the old systems and wished to assimilate the new principles of Christianity, but the hold and grip of the old would not allow them to take a great big leap into the new. Hence sprang up the half-way houses which are called Modern Religious Movements. Their history dates back from 1828 when Rajah Ram Mohan Ray founded the "Brahmo Samaj." Since then have appeared "The Prarthna Samaj," "The Ramakrishna Mission," "The Arya Samaj," and others.

A glance at the principles of the "Brahmo Samaj" will show that of all the Modern Religious Movements it is the most Christian in its outlook. Rajah Ram Mohan Ray was greatly influenced by the missionaries at

Serampur (Bengal) as a result of which he set himself to study Christianity seriously, learning both Hebrew and Greek in order to get at the sources. The result of his reading was thus expressed by himself: "The consequence of my long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth has been that I have found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles, and better adapted for the use of rational beings, than any other which have come to my knowledge." He also wrote a book entitled "The Principles of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness."

Keshub Chandra Sen, a great leader of the early "Brahmo Samaj," was deeply steeped in Christian thought, as will be seen from these two paragraphs from his many lectures and writings on Christ and Christianity:

"Christ has been my study for a quarter of a century. That God-man—they say half God and half man—walks daily all over this vast peninsula, from the Himálayas to Cape Comorin, enlightening and sanctifying its teeming millions. He is a mighty reality in Indian history. He is to us a living and moving spirit. We see Him and commune with

Him. He permeates society as a vital force, and imbues our daily life, and is mixed with our thoughts, speculations and pursuits."

"What moral serenity and sweetness pervade His life! What extraordinary tenderness and humility—what lamblike meekness and simplicity! His heart was full of mercy and forgiving kindness: friends and foes shared His charity and love. And yet, on the other hand, how resolute, firm and unyielding in His adherence to truth! He feared no mortal man, and braved even death itself for the sake of truth and God. Verily, when we read His life, His meekness, like the soft moon, ravishes the heart and bathes it in a flood of serene light; but when we come to the grand consummation of His career, His death on the cross, behold He shines as the powerful sun in its meridian splendour!" (Lectures in India, pp. 25-6, 330.)

The Brahmo Samaj was in Eastern India. In Western India, was founded the Prarthna Samaj whose leader was Dr. Atmaram Pandurang (1823-1895). He was greatly influenced by Keshab Chandra Sen and was also a personal friend of Dr. Wilson, the great educational missionary of Bombay.

The Ramakrishan Mission was founded in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Their official organ, "The Morning Star," issued from Patna on December 27, 1925, gives the history of the founding of the Mission as below:

"The Master Shri Rama Krishan had passed away, and the small group of young disciples who received the instruction of renunciation and service at the Master's feet returned to their respective homes and resumed their studies. Naren was the leader of this group after Shri Rama Krishan. A village woman invited them to consecrate her village home at Antpur. They all went. The dhuni (sacred fire) was kindled and the party sat around it and the leader began to speak of renunciation. Gradually the conversation turned toward the prophet of Nazareth, His divine love, pure simplicity, wonderful renunciation and the unparalleled sufferings and persecutions which He passed through for struggling humanity; how after His crucifixion His followers preached the truth of Christianity through horrible oppression, how their love for their Master and the truth inspired them to carry the message to the high and the

low and how they embraced the most ruthless persecutions and even cruel death with a smiling face blessing their oppressors with their last breath.

"Every word that the inspired Naren spoke entered directly into the hearts of his spellbound audience. Every mind was inspired with the zeal of renunciation and service. The grave inspired voice of the leader urged everybody to burn all their earthly desires in the fire. Every heart made a ready sacrifice of his all into the fire and Heaven received the offerings.

"Thus was formed the monastic order of Shri Rama Krishan which subsequently developed into the present form. To the utter astonishment of the whole party they learnt afterwards that the memorable evening on which the example of the Prophet of Nazareth and His apostles inspired them to renunciation and service was the Christmas Eve though they knew nothing about it at that time. Since then the day is held in the esteem of the brotherhood."

The Arya Samaj has flourished most in North India with its headquarters at Lahore (Punjab). It was founded by Swami Dayan-

and Sarasvati in 1875. Unlike the other Modern Movements, the Arya Samaj has been a bitter opponent of Christianity and missionary work in India. And yet it is surprising that even its founder received the impulse to start this movement from Keshab Chandra Sen who, as we have seen, was such an admirer and, in his own way, a follower of Christ. I have already said that even the opposition of the Arya friends helps to advertise Christ, and if the veil were removed we might see even in this opposition a plan of God to prepare a highway for Him to whom every knee shall bow.

What shall we say about these movements? Can we see the hand of God in them? Like the disciples of old we are sometimes tempted to say: "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us." The founders of these movements have not followed with us; they never became members of the organised Christian Church. Where shall we place them? Could they be used of God in preparing a highway for Christ? The Master said to John: "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us." The fact of the matter is that Chris-

tianity has spread far beyond the borders of the Christian Church. The whole world is filled with Christ. Elijah was not in the Christian Church; nor was Isaiah. How little they knew about Christ. It is doubtful whether they understood the full import of even what they wrote. Yet have we respect for them!

CHAPTER V

THE REVOLUTION IN THE MOHAMMEDAN WORLD

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At the present time there are three countries in the world which are a strong witness to the existence of Islam. These, are, so to say, the pulse of Islam. At any time one has simply to feel this pulse to know the condition of Islam. These countries are Turkey, Egypt and India. More than a third, that is 90 millions, of the Mohammedan population of the world live in these countries. These are a prominent witness to the existence of Islam. Turkey has been looked upon as the strong arm of Islam, Egypt its brain and India its heart. Just as a doctor diagnoses the general condition of the body by putting his finger on the pulse of the right arm, in the same manner we can know a great deal by putting our finger on Turkey. It will tell us how the brain and the heart have been functioning, and also the health of the whole Mohammedan system.

Turkey is not a very large country. According to the recent census, its population is 11,400,000 of which 850,000 live in the old capital, Constantinople. The Mohammedan population of Turkey is only 8,350,000. Why is it then the pulse of the Mohammedan world?

After Mohammed, those who took his place were called the Khalífás (Caliphs). The first Khalífá was Abu Baqr, after him Umar and then Usman and others. After some centuries the ruler of Turkey assumed the title of Sultán, and the office of the Khalífá was also transferred to him. The ruler of Turkey, therefore, was at once the Sultan of Turkey and the Khalífá or the religious head of the whole Mohammedan world. And as this religious head was also a political ruler the Islamic world began to look upon him as their strong arm. Whenever anything political happened in the Mohammedan world and they needed someone to fight for them they appealed to the Sultan. Whenever help was needed in connection with their religion they appealed to the Khalífá.

This state of affairs continued until the Great War which began in Europe in 1914. The war lasted for about four years. The

whole world was gradually drawn into it. Turkey had its full share. Following the War, in 1919, when the world began to re-adjust itself, changes undreamed of were brought about. Turkey could not be an exception in this respect; and they decided in favour of democracy rather than the Sultanate. For a while the Sultanate and the Khiláfat (Califate) both hung in the balances. Here in India the Ali brothers (Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali) went about collecting funds to help the Khiláfat. It was at that time that they sought the help of the Hindus and, in turn, promised to abstain from sacrificing the cow. This was accordingly agreed to and a religious pact was made. But the foundations were not solid and it did not last very long.

The War disillusioned the Turks in regard to several things—some religious, others political. They found out that the old doctrine of the Jehad (holy war) was not workable. When the armies of General Allenby began to bombard Turkish possessions, and several of them, including Jerusalem, actually passed out of their hands, there came a huge disillusionment upon them as regards the Jehad. They knew it would not work. They also

found out that as long as the Sultan had the office of the Khalífá of Islam they would always be in trouble with the rest of the world, for any trouble, political or religious, in the Mohammedan world would involve the Khalífá and the Sultan. Within a very short time a democratic government was proclaimed, and the Sultanate and the Khiláfat were both abolished for ever.

It was a very radical change, and it gave a rude shock to the Mohammedan world, for it was the first break in the Islamic solidarity of the world. However, it was done; and now for about eight years, numerous revolutionary changes have followed in its wake. The Turkish capital has been moved to Angora. The time-honoured custom of the Purdah (seclusion) has been abolished, and the Turkish women now go about as freely as any European woman. They go to schools and colleges and work in offices. Monogamy has been made the law of the land. Every marriage and every divorce has to be registered in the government office. The marriageable age has been raised so that no child can be married. The Darwesh order has been abolished and

some thousands of Darweshes turned out to earn their living like the rest of the people.

The Madrasas or the Maktabs where the Quran used to be taught and which were supported by the government have been closed down. Before the revolution all education used to be in Arabic, now it is done in English and the Arabic character has been replaced by the Roman. The Turks have also adopted the Christian calendar and the Roman character as the medium of communication.

No less remarkable is the change in the matter of dress. The fez, a sign of the house of Usman, has been prohibited to the employees of the government. Both men and women have begun to wear European clothes, and to make it possible, the government gives them long loans on very easy terms.

Mohammedanism has not been proscribed, but the state and the religion have been entirely separated. There is perfect religious freedom; but the Turks evidently do not want the Arab civilisation any longer. They are deliberately turning their back upon the past and their face towards the West. These changes are astounding and they are having

a very deep effect upon the whole of the Islamic world.

What is happening in Egypt? Egypt, the brain of Islam, with the great Moslem University at Cairo, is fast following the example of Turkey. There, too, the Purdah has been abolished, monogamy has been made the law of the land and the marriageable age has been considerably raised.

It is difficult at this stage to write much about the future of Afghanistan. King Amanullah has had to leave the throne, a fanatic seems to rule the country and chaos prevails everywhere. Mohammedanism seems to tremble in the balances. A few years will tell whether a sixth century conception and system of rigid rules will cramp the people or, like a chicken within its shell, life will grow too big for the shell and eventually break it.

What conclusion shall we come to? It is rather difficult to come to a definite conclusion, and one should hesitate to put it down with mathematical precision, but one cannot help asking the question: With the strong arm of Islam (Turkey) thus paralysed (so far as Islam is concerned) and the brain (Egypt) showing a similar tendency, will the heart

(India) persist in beating? If so, how long? I have put the pulse under your finger; if you know how to feel it, you can answer the question for yourself and determine the present condition of Islam.

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIANITY THROUGH FOUR STAGES

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A study of the religious movements in India shows that they have been passing through one or more of the six stages, *viz.,*

1. The stage of Opposition.
2. The stage of Indifference.
3. The stage of Tolerance.
4. The stage of Acceptance.
5. The stage of Decay.
6. The stage of Revival.

This is probably true not only of India, but the world over. It seems, however, especially true in India.

Take, for example, the Buddhist movement in India. It started with its founder Gautama Buddha early in 600 B.C., but no sooner was it born that it found that it had to pass through the stage of opposition, fighting Brahmanism tooth and nail and struggling for its existence. It, however, came out victorious through the first stage. Then followed

the stage of indifference or hardening. People began to say, "Let it alone, if there is any truth in it it will live, otherwise it will die a natural death." This was the stage of indifference for Buddhism. But, regardless of this attitude of the people, it lived on, silently permeating the land of its birth. Then came the time when it found the doors of the stage of tolerance open. Not that the stage of opposition or the stage of indifference had altogether passed away. There was still some opposition and there was still some indifference, but, on the whole, people became tolerant of Buddhism and began to consider its claims, until by about 257 B.C., Asoka, the king of Bihar, became a zealous convert to the faith, and, we may say, Buddhism here entered the fourth stage—the stage of acceptance. This was followed by a period of downfall and decay, so that while it has won converts in other lands, it has practically been, during the last thousand years, a banished religion from its native home. At the present time, however, Buddhism is passing through the sixth stage. A tremendous effort is being made to revive it. We see then that Buddhism has been through all the six stages

mentioned above. In the same way we might mention Jainism and trace some of the stages it has passed through, but probably the one example of Buddhism is quite sufficient to illustrate our point.

Christianity, too, has not been an exception to this rule. It has had to follow the same course and pass through some of these stages. As we have already shown in Chapter III, if tradition be true, possibly the first man who brought Christianity into India was St. Thomas, one of the disciples of Jesus Christ. The Mar Thoma Church on the Malabar Coast claims that St. Thomas came to that coast in 52 A.D. and won a number of converts from among the higher classes who were subsequently called the "Christians of St. Thomas," now "The Syrian Church." But what happened to St. Thomas? According to the same tradition he was murdered by the opponents of this new faith at Mylapur, near Madras. This is what happened to the first man who brought Christianity into India. Nor could the successors of St. Thomas, the early missionaries and others who came out to India, avoid passing through the stage of opposition. Early converts were disinherited,

ostracised from society, shoved out of their homes and, in some cases, even done to death. The writer's own father, on his return from Trinidad where he accepted Christ as his Lord and Saviour, had to leave his father's home quietly one night and take refuge in a missionary home some miles away, because when his people found that they could not make him go back to Hinduism they conspired to take his life.

However, gradually that stage passed away, organised opposition died out and the stage of indifference or hardening was ushered in. This must have proved a very trying period for the preachers of the Gospel. Nevertheless, their persistent efforts, through hospitals, schools, colleges, leper asylums, widow homes, orphanages and direct preaching of the word, could not but make their influence felt, and for some time, though not a very long period, there have surely been signs of tolerance. Some of the recent converts from among the higher classes are being allowed to remain in their own homes and even to preach the Gospel. The writer knows of several such converts who are living with their non-Christian families even though they are the only

ones in their homes who have been baptised. Ten years ago this was unthinkable.

Some time ago, when in a large city in North India a non-Christian member of a Christian College decided to become a member of the organised Christian Church through the rite of baptism his non-Christian friends and fellow-workers came to the church and gladly witnessed his baptism, signifying their approval of this further step since to all intents and purposes he had been a Christian before. There was a time in India when in some places an open baptism of a high caste man would have caused riots. In another place when the non-Christian father of a young man learned that his son was going to become a Christian through baptism, instead of getting enraged, he affectionately called the young son into his presence and said, "If you are going to become a Christian I hope you will be a real one." "A real one," this is the need of India, and, of course, of the whole world.

India certainly is passing through a stage of remarkable tolerance for Christianity which she misunderstood, hated and opposed. But, after studying the situation all over the

country, I have come to the conclusion that Christianity is not only passing through this stage of tolerance, but it seems as though it has its left foot in the borders of the stage of tolerance and the right foot well into the stage of acceptance, with the whole being, so to say, bent in the right direction like an athlete ready to start off for a race.

I think enough straws have been furnished in the preceding pages to show which way the wind is blowing, but I give below some more. The Rev. Charles W. Posnett of Medak (Dominion of the Nizam of Hyderabad) writes in the "Life of Faith" of 8th June, 1927:

"Last week once more I invited to Medak all high caste Hindus who were seeking Jesus. Twenty years ago they would have considered themselves polluted by eating in our compound, but for three days they have been our happy, friendly guests. . . . Men who used to cover their hands with a cloth to shake hands threw their arms around me. . . .

"On Sunday morning we had a love feast of broken cocoanuts and sugar which the Hindu leaders first brought up with their thank-offerings, so that we might bless the

trays. Every man gave a thank-offering, and then they took the trays and distributed with their hands to everyone. It was the Hindu love feast. After the service I asked those who were really determined to confess Christ and to follow Him to come and talk it over with us, and quite fifty people came to my house. . . . We chose out eighteen about whom we felt quite certain and promised the rest to come to their villages when their families were ready.

"The first to be chosen was a village Brahman chief—a man of good position and great influence. He had seen others in his village baptised, but I had never thought that that day might come when he, too, would kneel humbly at the feet of the crucified Saviour. Yet he had travelled 120 miles to be here, and this morning he came forward first of all to give his witness at the baptism service.

"The whole crowd of 220 visitors were there, and they listened spellbound as he confessed that he had gradually come to know that Jesus Christ was the only Saviour. The congregation that had listened and watched this Brahman's testimony and baptism were greatly moved. When he had returned to his

place the remaining seventeen high caste Hindus, all of them men of solid position and respected in their villages, came up in small groups and our Indian ministers baptised them in turns. There was no doubt about their sincerity; every man promised to be a witness. I shall never forget the face of one man who was praying a few yards away from me. There were others praying all around, but his face was almost transfigured. He was indeed talking with the Master.

"Twelve months ago this work for which we have waited and prayed for 100 years in South India began. Our first confessors are standing firm today in the midst of bitter persecution, but this has not hindered the coming of the kingdom. The numbers are slowly creeping up and we are looking forward to a great ingathering amongst these privileged leaders of Hinduism. God has given us tens of thousands, and now He has crowned all by this wonderful drawing of the high caste Hindus to Himself. No one can tell where it will stop, but we all know that if we are faithful it will become an immense strength to the church of God in Hyderabad."

Does it not look like the stage of accept-

ance? But let me tell you another story: When I was in Hyderabad about three years ago one of the missionaries there told me—and he has grown grey in the service of the Master here in India—that there were 200 secret disciples of Jesus Christ in Hyderabad among the higher classes and that one day he received a letter from a non-Christian whom he had not known, asking him to send him "two copies of inspired thoughts." My missionary friend did not know of any such book and wrote and enquired if he meant the Christian Scriptures. The reply came, "extracts from the Christian Scriptures." He then sent him two copies of the "Daily Light." After some time this non-Christian called on the missionary and told him that the "Daily Light" was exactly the book he wanted and that he had sent a copy to each of his young sons who were studying at a college away from home and for whose guidance he knew of nothing better than the books the missionary had sent. Is this tolerance or acceptance?

I will close this chapter with just one more statement of a prominent man who calls himself an un-baptised Christian and is not a secret disciple. He is a government title

holder and a Master of Arts. "I do not set Jesus among the many," said he before a crowd of picked people; "He is the first and the last. He is the hand that reaches out of the dark to clasp the hand of men as they grope in the dark after God. We have called to the mute silences and they have not answered us, but Jesus is the voice from within the veil answering our cry." Then his voice broke down and with tears in his eyes he said, "I must propagate Him, I must share Him."

I could quote hundreds of statements like this from sincere, thoughtful men in India, but these will be enough to help us see what stage Christianity is passing through in India at the present time. Lest, however, I should be misunderstood and lest the picture should appear overdrawn, let me say this that I do not mean that there is now no opposition at all to the Gospel in India or that it is all smooth sailing for the preacher of the Gospel. No, there is a good deal of opposition in some quarters and also indifference. There is also a very subtle effort being made to include Christ in the Hindu pantheon, and so to divert attention from His uniqueness. Time and again in my evangelistic meetings for educated non-

Christians men have given their public assent to what I had to say about Christ, except that instead of preaching him as unique I should be willing to look upon Him as one of the many.

Every inch of ground has to be gained with much sweating of blood and constant vigilance, and the Kingdom of Christ in India calls for our utmost and best. In fact one may find all the four stages at the same time and in the same place, but anyone who has known India the past fifty years can see the remarkable change in the mind and thought of the people. It can be safely said that opposition and indifference and intolerance as definite organised stages have passed away and the Kingdom of Christ is making headway as never before. The word preached through the centuries shall not return unto Him void and surely He is making "all things new." We await a landslide into the kingdom.

"I know of a land that is sunk in shame
Of hearts that faint and tire;
And I know of a name, a name, a name,
It can set this land on fire;
Its sound is a brand, its letters flame,
I know of a name, a name, a name,
'Twill set this land on fire."

CHAPTER VII

WHERE AND WHEN DOES INDIA SEE CHRIST?

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India does not see Christ in Western civilisation, though many recognise that there is a good deal in Western civilisation that is worth while and even imitate it. India does not see Christ in the organised church, though the organised church is of importance, and personally I believe that in spite of all its shortcomings the organised church is the best place for Christian fellowship and spiritual uplift. India does not see Christ in the Christian Creeds, though the Creeds have their place. India does not see Christ in mere Christian preaching, though preaching must be done and it has its Scriptural warrant. India does not even see Christ in the high Christian principles contained in the Scriptures, if those principles do not show themselves in everyday practical life. Where and when does India see Christ then? I will let India answer this question.

An outstanding Hindu nationalist in Bihar, a man greatly respected and loved says: "We should listen with great attention to what missionaries like Dr. —— have to say. The other day I visited with Mahatma Gandhi the Leper Asylum at Purelia and what impressed me most was the quiet, self-less service which these missionaries are rendering, exposing themselves to dangers of the disease and helping the poor. It is this only that can raise a nation. We lack this." Here the preaching had become real, backed by this illustration of service.

Listen to another great son of India—Principal Sen of the Bihar National College of Patna: "The time when I saw Christ most vividly was not when I heard sermons, but I think it was in 1900 during an outbreak of plague when the shadow of death was upon us that I saw Christ face to face. The missionaries went from house to house helping the sick. It was then that I felt that God had come down to us and that Christ was just here. One day I called on Mrs. ——. Her husband gave me a seat in the drawing room and as Mrs. —— came in I stood up to shake hands with her, but she said, 'Mr. Sen, do not

shake hands with me for my hands are plague-stained.' She had just come from the people lying down with the plague. It was then that I saw Christ and have never forgotten Him. The East penetrated the West and the West penetrated the East, that is the East gave Christ to the West and now the West has come and offers Christ to us. Let us take Him. We should be glad to be conquered by Him. India is at the present time being crowned with the crown of thorns, but there will be a resurrection."

Here is Sir Raghunath Rao Subnis, Ex-Prime Minister of Kolahpur and a great statesman: "Fifty years ago when I was a lad I used to listen to the preaching of missionaries. They preached at the street corners and crowds gathered around them, not, however, to listen to them but to scorn. Tonight I could not help seeing the contrast. This great crowd sat here in breathless attention and at any time you could hear a pin drop. What has made this difference in the attitude of India towards Christ? Some would say that it is only education, some that it is the growth of liberal ideas and civilisation; but the thing that has done it has been the fact that there

have lived among us these missionaries. Dr. Jones spoke of the scavenger work done at the Ashram of Mahatma Gandhi by Brahmans and others. These people here have been doing the scavenger work of the highest kind. They have taken the low castes and have washed them soul and body and have made men of them and teachers of others. You have only to go a few miles from here to see the people at the Leper Asylum whom they have gathered—the people whom we would not touch. In the hospital at Miraj, without respect of caste or creed or religion, people are served and healed. It has been this service, unselfishly given, by men who could have been millionaires had they desired, that has made possible this scene tonight." The above statement was made in the Palace Theatre of Kolhapur which was packed with educated non-Christians eagerly listening to the Gospel.

I once had the privilege of sharing the same home with a Hindu university professor. He is not baptised and is not therefore a member of the organised church, and yet as I lived and talked with him I felt my soul lifted high. He openly calls himself a Christian and testifies to the saving power of Christ. I asked

him to tell me what made him give himself to Christ. He said that when he was an art student in the Christian College of Madras under the late greatly revered Dr. Miller, his family was once so reduced to poverty that they had no meals for two days. On the third day his father took off the two little earrings from his mother's ears and with the sale proceeds provided a meal for the family. Waiting for his meal the young man was late coming to the college that day and as he entered the class Principal Miller asked him the reason for his lateness. He said, "What could I say before the class, I simply burst out weeping." The great Dr. Miller consoled him and said, "Come and see me in my office after the class." The period being over, the young man went to Dr. Miller who very kindly gave him a seat and asked him what the trouble was. When he made a clean breast of the whole thing Principal Miller was in tears with him. He could say or do nothing, as the proud young Brahman would not accept financial help from a Christian, but he just wept with the young man and then they quietly parted.

My friend told me that those tears of Dr. Miller drew him to Christ. He said, "I began

seriously to believe that there must be something in the religion of Dr. Miller if this great man could so sympathise with me." Is this not a beautiful illustration of what Christ said? "Weep with them that weep and rejoice with them that rejoice." It is just this kind of imaginative sympathy that shows Christ to India; never the bossing, dominating type of life of which alas! there seems to be far too much in India. No missionary or official has a right to come to India who is not willing to serve and also to learn. You cannot cram Christianity down a fellow's throat. But India will not fail to see it if you show it in your life.

I hope my readers will pardon me for coming a little closer home and giving an illustration from my own town of Indore in Central India. I was one day having my hair cut in a barber's shop. There were other men in the shop and they got talking among themselves. One of them said, "The Mission Hospital here is a wonderful institution. I have just had my wife treated there. You go to the government hospital, the first thing is the fee of sixteen rupees if you want the services of the Chief Medical Officer. But here

in this Mission Hospital, whether it is day or night, you can go and receive the same attention from these missionary ladies, irrespective of your financial means. They look after the poor and the rich alike." "Oh," said the barber, "such is their religion." I was simply an interested listener. They did not even know that I was a Christian and one connected with the Indore Mission Staff. The service of the doctor ladies and nurses had driven them to think of the Christian religion, which is Christ.

Where and when does India see Christ? In practical everyday life. Western civilisation —and for that matter any civilisation—our churches, our creeds, our preaching and even our Scriptures will become full of meaning and attraction the moment Christ is put at the centre of things. This is India's demand at the present time. She wants to see Christ actually at work, not a theory or dogma but a reality in the lives of professed Christians, both of the East and of the West, for the East and the West are no longer thousands of miles apart. We sink or swim according as we let India see the concrete Christ in a concrete way. Here is the challenge of the situation

and we can capture it if we let Christ be the centre of our very being. It is worth doing and being.

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Blessings abound where'er He reigns;
The prisoner leaps to lose his chains;
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blest.

Let every creature rise and bring
Peculiar honours to our King;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud Amen.

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